

# THE BOYS OF THE BIBLE





Merry Christmas  
to the  
Stuart boys  
from  
Kate  
1930







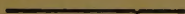


*Frontispiece*

MOSES SPOKE TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.

# THE BOYS OF THE BIBLE

BY  
HARTWELL JAMES



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# THE BOYS OF THE BIBLE





## THE BOY WHO OBEYED

THE STORY OF ISAAC

**A**FTER the death of Noah, which took place almost two thousand years before the birth of Jesus the Christ, the descendants of Ham, one of Noah's sons, rebelled against the domination of Shem, the oldest son of Noah, the one of whom his father had said that he should be a lord unto his brethren.

Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, the "mighty hunter" of his tribe, was the leader in this rebellion. The plain of Shinar, between the rivers

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Tigris and Euphrates, was the spot selected for the building of a new capital, and on the west bank of the Euphrates the city of Babel was begun.

The plans of Nimrod and his associates included the building of a tower whose top should reach to heaven and which should be a pledge or constant reminder that the descendants of Ham should cling together forever. Beside this it is not unlikely that with the traditions of the Flood in mind it was deemed wise to rear a structure which would afford them safety if another flood should come upon the earth.

At the time of the building of the tower of Babel all men spoke one language and understood what every one else said, but to punish its builders God made them speak in different ways to each other, so that no man knew what the other was saying. In consequence the descendants of Ham were scattered in all directions.

Two years before Noah died, a man named Abram was born. He was a descendant of Shem, and his father's name was Terah.

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While most of the people around him worshipped idols, Abram feared and worshipped God, who chose him as the man who would accomplish the promise made to Adam and Eve before they were driven from the Garden of Eden. One race of people was to be chosen from all those living in the world, to become a great nation, and from this nation a Saviour should be born.

So God told Abram to leave his father's house and his kindred, and his country, and go into a land which He would show him. He told him that He would bless him with prosperity, make him a great name in the world, and that in him all families of the earth should be blessed.

When Abram was seventy-five years old, at the command of God, he took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot, and all their flocks and herds, and their household goods, and went into a land called Canaan. Here they lived for a while, but when a famine came they had to go to Egypt, where there was plenty of food.

Sarai was a very beautiful woman, and as

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Abram was afraid the Egyptians would kill him in order that Sarai might be married to one of their princes, it was agreed between them that Sarai was to pass as his sister and not as his wife. For the sake of the beautiful woman the King of Egypt, whose name was Pharaoh, treated Abram well, and he grew to be a very rich man owning vast herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, camels, and other animals. He had a great many servants, too, and much gold and silver.

There are six different words used in the Bible to designate gold, thus showing its uses and the estimation in which it was held. In the time of Abram it was not coined into money, but when used for purposes of exchange was weighed. Silver was also used extensively for personal adornment and the decoration of the house.

All went well with Abram and Sarai until the King found out the deception which had been practised on him. Then he sent them away from Egypt, but they were allowed to take with



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them all the wealth Abram had accumulated. Lot had lived with his uncle all this time and like him was a very rich man.

When Abram and Lot left Egypt they went to Bethel, where Abram had lived before. They seem to have been able to live in harmony, but after a while each had so many flocks and herds that their servants quarreled about the places where the animals should be fed and watered. It seemed best for them to separate and Abram gave Lot his choice of the land.

Lot chose the beautiful plain south of the river Jordan because it was very fruitful and well watered, while Abram remained in the land of Canaan, where God appeared to him and repeated His promise that he should have that land and that his descendants should have it after him.

After this Abram removed his tents to the Oaks of Mamre, a place named after an Ammonite chief living in the neighborhood. It was not far from where the town of Hebron now

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stands, and a well which Abram caused to be dug can be seen there to-day.

At Mamre Abram built an altar to God and lived there in peace until he heard that there had been war in the country where Lot lived and that his nephew had been made a prisoner.

Abram pursued the kings who had captured Lot, and rescued his nephew.

After this God again talked with Abram. He promised him that he should have a son and that his descendants should be like the stars in number. They would be strangers in a strange land, be ill-treated and servants, but at the end of four hundred years they should come out of the strange land with great wealth. Then God changed his name to Abraham, and changed the name of his wife to Sarah.

Lot at this time lived in Sodom, one of the cities on that beautiful plain he had chosen when Abraham divided the land with him. He raised his family there and allowed his daughters to marry among the inhabitants. But the people of Sodom and of Gomorrah were very wicked

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and God punished them by raining fire and brimstone upon them and on all the other cities of the plain.

But before doing this God warned Lot, who escaped, taking with him his wife and two daughters. Lot's wife looked back at the spectacle and became in appearance like "a pillar of salt." There is no trace of these cities left to-day. The salt and bitter waters of the Dead Sea cover the places where they stood, and no plants or trees will grow near it.

When Abraham was one hundred years old his long-promised son was born. There were great rejoicings at his birth and Abraham named him Isaac, which means "laughter." There were also feastings as the child grew into boyhood. Isaac was a dutiful and affectionate son, loving and revering his father and spending all the time he could with him. Abraham grew to love his son very dearly and almost, if not quite, idolized him.

Abraham and Sarah and Isaac were now living near a place called Beersheba, where he had

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planted trees and dug wells, water and shade being two very important things to have in that country. One day Abraham heard a voice calling him by name. He had heard it before and knew that the God whom he trusted and served was speaking to him, so he replied, "Behold, here am I."

Abraham must have been surprised when God told him what he was to do, but he was willing to obey. God told him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Abraham did not plead with God to change His purpose, neither did he plead for his son's life, but early the next morning he took Isaac and two servants, with food and wood for the fire, and started on his journey.

We can believe that Abraham did not say much during the three days it took them to reach the spot where the test of his absolute faith in God was to be made, but probably Isaac

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was interested in all that he saw and asked many questions as they went along. He was then about twelve years old and accustomed to obey his father in all things, yet he must have had a boy's curiosity about what was going to occur.

Sacrifices to God were not an unusual sight to Isaac, for his father had brought him up to believe in the God whom he and all his household worshipped, but when he had seen his father offer sacrifices before, some animal had always been provided for the burnt offering.

So when they came near the place where the altar was to be built and Abraham had sent the servants away to wait for them, he was more curious than ever. His father had told him to carry the wood, while he had in his own hands the bowl containing fire and the knife he used for sacrifices.

Then Isaac asked his father, "Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham did not wish to tell him then what was to be done, so he replied,

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“My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.”

Then they reached the place to which God had led Abraham, and there he must have told Isaac what God had commanded him to do. It must have seemed very strange to Isaac, but he was a boy who obeyed. So he helped his father to build an altar of the stones lying about and to put the wood on top of it. Then he allowed himself to be bound like an animal that was to be sacrificed and laid on the wood.

There he lay, knowing that he would have to be killed, knowing that the wood would have to be set on fire, and then that the smoke of this burnt offering would go up to the God whom his father had taught him to worship, as he had seen the smoke of so many other sacrifices ascend.

But the test of Abraham's faith had been made and God called to him not to harm the boy. He had proved his faith by his willingness to do as he had been commanded.

As Abraham looked around he saw a ram



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caught by his horns in the bushes close by, and, releasing Isaac from the altar, he offered the ram as a sacrifice instead. Then father and son went back to their home together.

Some time after this Abraham and his family were living once more at the Oaks of Mamre, and there Sarah died. She was one hundred and twenty-seven years old and is the only woman mentioned in the Bible whose age at the time of her death is recorded.

Then Abraham bought a field of "Ephron the Hittite," and in this field was a cave called Machpelah. In this cave Sarah was buried, and in time it became a family sepulchre.

When Isaac reached the age of forty years, Abraham was a very old man. He was very anxious to see Isaac married, so he called Eliezer, his steward, and told him to find a wife for Isaac among his own kindred. He told him to take ten camels and many beautiful presents and that God would show him the direction in which he was to go.

So Eliezer started on his journey and in time

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came near the city of Nahor, where the family of one of Abraham's brothers lived. There he stopped by a well and made his camels kneel to let them drink. He knew that the women of that country went to the wells at evening to draw water for their households and he hoped that one of them might be the woman he sought. While he waited he prayed, asking God that the woman who should give him water out of her pitcher would be the one He had chosen as a wife for Isaac.

Almost before his prayer was ended it was answered. A beautiful young woman, whose name was Rebekah, appeared, and Eliezer asked her to give him a drink from her pitcher. She did this very graciously and also drew water for his camels. Then Eliezer knew that this was the woman who was to be Isaac's wife.

Then Eliezer asked her to tell him who she was and if he could lodge at her father's house. Rebekah answered that she was the daughter of Bethuel, a nephew of Abraham. Then she told him there was room for him in her father's

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house and also plenty of food for his camels.

Then Rebekah ran away to tell her family about the man she had met at the well and showed them the ornaments of gold which he had given her, while Abraham's faithful steward bowed his head and worshipped God for His kindness to his master and to him.

When Laban, Rebekah's brother, heard his sister's story and saw the presents the man had given her, he went to meet Eliezer and bid him welcome to their home. He had the camels taken care of and fed and food prepared for his guest.

But Eliezer would not eat until he had told them his errand. He told them of Abraham's great riches, how God had given him a son in his old age, and how rich that son was to be. He told them of Abraham's desire to have Isaac marry among his kindred and how his master had sent him to find a wife for his son. He also told them how he had prayed to God at the well and how God had answered his prayer.

Then Rebekah's father and brother saw that

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God had sent Eliezer to them and that she might return with him and be Isaac's wife. Again Eliezer thanked God and then brought out more presents, which he gave to Rebekah and to her family.

The next morning Eliezer was ready to start on their journey, but her family did not wish to have Rebekah leave them so soon and asked him to let her stay with them for at least ten days. But Eliezer told them that God had prospered him in his undertaking and that they must go at once.

Then they called Rebekah, and said unto her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" and she said, "I will go." So, taking their presents and the jewels and clothes her family had given to her, Rebekah and her nurse and other servants rode away on the camels Eliezer had brought to Abraham's home.

It was evening when the little company neared the end of their journey, and Isaac, not unlikely watching for the return of his father's servant, was walking in the fields. When Re-

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Rebekah saw him she asked who he was, and when she was told it was Isaac she alighted from the camel she was riding and wrapped herself in a veil. Isaac greeted her tenderly and took her to the tent which had been his mother's. She became his wife, for he loved her at once.

Not long after this Abraham died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, and was buried by the side of Sarah.

About twenty years after the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah twin sons were born to them. Their names were Esau and Jacob. As they grew up Esau became very fond of hunting. He was Isaac's favorite, while Jacob was the favorite of his mother.

Esau came home one day very faint and hungry from his hunting, and Jacob seeing his condition, bought his birthright from him for some food that he was cooking. Being the older of the twins, Esau had several advantages over his brother. According to custom his place in the family was higher and he was entitled at the death of Isaac to inherit twice as

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much of his father's wealth as Jacob would have. This was called a birthright, but Esau does not seem to have attached much importance to it and easily fell into Jacob's scheme.

Some time after Jacob had driven this sharp bargain with his brother there was a famine in the land where Isaac lived, and he went with his family to a place called Gerar, in the country of the Philistines. His father had lived there at one time and had dug wells there, but Isaac found they had been filled up.

So he reopened the wells and had others dug from which he could water his flocks and herds.

After this Isaac went to Beersheba to live, and there God spoke to him and repeated the promises made to his father Abraham.

One day Isaac, who was then very old and almost blind, asked Esau to take his bow and arrows and go and get some venison, make it into the food which he liked, and bring it to him that he might eat it and bless him before he died. But Rebekah heard this, and as she loved Jacob better than she did his brother, she dis-



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guised him with skins to make him hairy like Esau and put some of Esau's clothes on him.

Then she prepared some of the food Isaac liked and sent Jacob with it to get the blessing from his father. In answer to Isaac's question Jacob told him that he was Esau. Then his father ate the food Jacob had brought and blessed him. He told him the good things God would do for him and that he should be a lord over his brethren.

As soon as Jacob had left his father, Esau came in with the food he had prepared, and when he heard what his brother had done he cried out bitterly, "Bless me, even me also, O my father." But Isaac told him he could not give him what he had already given his brother, but he did bless him while telling him that he should live by the sword and should serve his brother for a while, but the time would come when he would break away from Jacob's rule.

From that time Esau hated his brother and said he would kill him after their father died. And Rebekah heard of it and told Jacob. Then

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Jacob was sent away to her brother Laban and told to choose for a wife one of Laban's daughters.

So Jacob went to one land and Esau to another. Years afterward they met and were reconciled, and when Isaac died at Hebron, at the age of one hundred and eighty years, they buried him in the cave of Machpelah. It is not known when or where Rebekah died, but we are told she also was buried in the same place.

Isaac was by no means as strong a personality as his father Abraham or his son Jacob, but he had very many lovable qualities. He worshipped God and won the respect of the chiefs of the powerful tribes around him. He was generous to his friends, yielding to his neighbors, and to Abraham a dutiful and obedient son.



## THE FARMER BOY

### THE STORY OF JACOB

**A** BRAHAM, the father of the great Israelitish, or Hebrew, nation, was the chief, or sheikh, as he would be called now, of his family or tribe, and with his flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, camels and other animals, servants and followers, moved from place to place, adding to his wealth as time went on and making for himself a respected name wherever he went.

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God chose Abraham to be the founder of this mighty nation, and at his death promised a continuation of His favor to his son Isaac, who had married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, who was Abraham's nephew. Isaac was an only son and inherited his father's great wealth.

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons whose names were Esau and Jacob, and perhaps no brothers were ever more unlike in their dispositions. Esau grew up to be a hunter. Nothing pleased him so much as to take his bow and arrows and spend days away from home in the pursuit of deer, from whose flesh he made food which his father liked.

Among other customs of that time which seem strange to us now was that of rich men and their wives and their sons as well preparing food with their own hands, although it is done in the East to some extent in these days.

Abraham was certainly a rich man with a host of servants at command, yet the Bible tells us that Sarah, his wife, prepared with her own hands the food for the strangers who visited the

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patriarch as he sat in the door of his tent by the Oaks of Mamre. We can understand then that the sons of Isaac, who were even richer than his father, prepared food themselves.

Esau was looked upon as the older son and treated accordingly. There were certain privileges which by custom were given to oldest sons at their fathers' deaths, and these things constituted what was called a birthright. In addition to being treated as the older son Esau was also the favorite son of his father.

But Rebekah loved Jacob more than she did Esau. Jacob was of a much quieter disposition than his brother, living near his mother and probably spending much of his time with her. We may think of him as a man who liked to live in comfort and peace, hospitable to strangers, as was the custom of the country, yet all the time wishing, as he looked out over the flocks and herds, that his was to be an older brother's portion when they were divided.

The word Jacob means "supplanter," or one who takes the place of another, and Jacob acted

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up to the meaning of his name at the first opportunity. It came about in this way.

Jacob was cooking some food one day which smelt and looked very tempting to Esau when he came in hungry and tired to the point of exhaustion from one of his hunting trips. He asked his brother to give him some of this food, and Jacob, seeing a chance to acquire what he coveted, told him he would do so if he would give him his birthright in exchange for it. Probably Esau's hunger was more to him at the moment than any privileges he might have later in life, so the bargain was made.

After this there was a famine in the land where Isaac and his family lived, but Isaac did not go to Egypt to escape it as his father had done on a similar occasion. Instead, he took his family into the land of the Philistines and lived for a time at a place called Gerar.

Both Isaac and Rebekah disapproved of the marriage Esau made with a woman of a neighboring tribe, but in spite of this Isaac loved him very dearly, and when he felt that he should

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not live much longer he wished to bestow a blessing or promise upon him. So he called Esau and asked him to go and get some of the meat he liked and cook it for him, telling him that when he brought it he would bless him.

Esau set out on his errand, but as soon as he had gone, Rebekah, who had overheard what Isaac had said, called Jacob, whom she loved more than she did Esau, and told him that now he had a chance to get the blessing instead of his brother, and showed him how it could be done.

Rebekah first sent Jacob to get some meat, which she cooked in the way Isaac liked, and then she dressed him in some of Esau's clothes. Then she put hairy skins on his hands and neck to make him feel like Esau if Isaac should put his hands on him. Then she gave him the meat she had prepared and sent him on his dishonest errand.

So Jacob went where his blind father was sitting and said, "My father." And Isaac replied, "Here am I; who art thou, my son?" Then Jacob told him that he was his son Esau,

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and that he had brought the food as he had been asked to do. Isaac asked him how the meat could have been found and prepared so quickly, and Jacob replied, "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me."

Still Isaac was not satisfied and had him come nearer that he might feel of him, but the disguise was good and Isaac said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." But before he ate he made one more appeal. "Art thou," he asked, "my very son Esau?" and Jacob, forced by the first lie to tell another and then another, replied, "I am."

Isaac ate the food and then blessed Jacob, whom he supposed to be Esau. He promised a great and prosperous future for him. People and nations should serve him, and his brothers should bow down to him. Scarcely had Jacob left his father, when Esau came back with the food his father had asked him to bring and claimed the blessing.

When Isaac realized that he had been deceived he told Esau that he could not recall the



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promises he had made to the one who had brought him the food, and then Esau, who had sold his birthright, and now had been tricked out of the blessing that was rightfully his, cried out bitterly, "Bless me, even me also, O my father."

Then Isaac told him that it was his brother Jacob who had robbed him, and Esau replied, "Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" And then in the bitterness of his heart he wept.

Moved by Esau's distress, Isaac did bless him, but the promises he made were different from those he had given Jacob. He told Esau that he should live by the sword, that he should serve his brother, but that the time would come when he would break away from his brother's rule.

Esau hated his brother after this and made threats that he would kill him after their father

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died. His mother heard of these threats and was afraid he would carry them out, so she proposed that Jacob should go to her brother Laban and stay with him until Esau's anger had cooled. Isaac agreed to this and told him also to choose a wife among Laban's daughters.

Before Jacob's departure Isaac blessed him, once more telling him that he and his descendants should have the land which God had promised to Abraham and his family. So the mother and her favorite son parted. Their deceit had given Jacob the blessing that should have been Esau's, but Rebekah was never to see Jacob again.

Jacob started on his journey to his uncle's house, and when night came lay down to sleep, making a pillow of stones for his head. In his sleep a wonderful dream or vision came to him. He saw a ladder with its foot resting on the earth and its top reaching to heaven. Upon this ladder angels went up and down, while at the top stood God Himself, who promised Jacob that He would be with him wherever he went,

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and that he and his children should have the land in which he was at that time.

When Jacob awoke he made a pillar of the stone upon which his head had rested, poured oil upon it, and called the name of the place Bethel. Then he made a vow that if God would go with him and provide for him he would serve Him and give to Him a tenth part of all he possessed.

Although Jacob knew a good deal about God, up to this time he had no personal knowledge of Him, but during this, his first night from home, he had, in a vision, seen God and heard His voice in the most gracious of promises. His whole life was changed, and from that time he was God's man.

Then Jacob went on his way again and came to a well near Haran, where Laban lived. This well was not like the one where Eliezer, the steward of Abraham, had first seen the maiden who became Jacob's mother. It was more like a cistern or tank with an opening at the top

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which was covered by a great stone which had to be rolled away to get at the water.

Three flocks of sheep were lying near by and Jacob asked the shepherds if they knew Laban and why they did not water their flocks. The men told him that they knew Laban and that they were waiting for his sheep to arrive and then all the flocks would be watered.

Just then Rachel, one of the daughters of Laban, appeared with her father's sheep, and the shepherds told Jacob who she was. Then Jacob went to the well, rolled the stone away, and watered Laban's sheep. Then he told Rachel who he was and she hastened away to tell her father.

When Laban heard who had come to visit him he ran to meet Jacob and made him welcome just as he had done years before when his sister Rebekah had told him of her meeting with her uncle's steward outside the city of Nahor.

Jacob staid with Laban for a month, helping him with his flocks and becoming more and more in love with Rachel. Then Laban asked him if

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he would like to be his shepherd and if so what wages he would wish. Jacob told Laban he would serve him seven years for his daughter Rachel and so the bargain was made. We are told that, "Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

But Laban was as crafty as Jacob had been when he obtained his brother's birthright and robbed him of his blessing. He tricked Jacob and made him work seven more years for Rachel.

After the second seven years had passed and Jacob had married Rachel, he made another bargain with Laban and this time it was greatly to his own advantage. He lived with Laban for a number of years and then God appeared to him, saying, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred."

So, without letting Laban know anything

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about it, Jacob took his family, his flocks and herds and all his possessions, and started for his father's home in the land of Canaan. He had been gone three days before Laban knew that he had left him. After seven days he overtook Jacob camped on Mount Gilead.

When they met, Laban accused Jacob of carrying away some of his possessions, and searched his tent for them; but after a while, not finding them, they talked over all that had occurred since Jacob first came to Laban's house, and in the end they made a covenant or agreement of friendship and set up a heap of stones for a witness to it and called it "Mizpah," which means, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another."

So Jacob and his family kept on their way to the land of Canaan. He had now eleven sons and one daughter and was a rich man, for God had kept His promise and blessed him abundantly. On the way he heard that his brother Esau was coming to meet him with a band of four hun-

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dred men. Jacob remembered how he had taken advantage of his brother and was afraid the time for Esau's promised revenge had come.

But Jacob prayed to God to protect him, and after sending his family by night across a little mountain river, he remained alone in the darkness on the other side. The Bible tells us that there he met God in the shape of a man and wrestled with Him until morning saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And God did bless him and gave him a new name—that of "Israel," which means "a prince of God."

In the morning the brothers met, but Esau's anger was all gone and in its place was such love for Jacob that he embraced him and kissed him, while both wept for joy. Jacob had prepared a present of sheep and cattle and camels and other animals for his brother, which at first Esau did not wish to take, but he accepted it at last and then the brothers separated, Esau going to the hilly country of Seir, while Jacob continued his journey.

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After a while God told Jacob to go to Bethel, where, on his first night from home, he had vowed to give Him a tenth part of all his possessions, and to build an altar there. His way to Bethel lay through a hostile country, but God protected him as He had promised, and at last Jacob reached the pillar which he had set up, and there he built the altar and worshipped God.

Jacob's mother had died during his long absence from home and now her old nurse, Deborah, died, so in memory of the great love mother and son had for each other he buried Rebekah's faithful servant under an oak tree and called it "the oak of tears."

From Bethel Jacob now set out for Hebron, but on the way, just before they came to Bethlehem—the little village where Jesus was born many years afterwards—his beloved Rachel died, leaving him his twelfth and last son, whom he called Benjamin. Rachel was buried where she died and a pillar was placed above her grave. Then Jacob went on to see his father, who was then living at Abraham's favorite



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dwelling-place at the "Oaks of Mamre," and there Isaac died, "being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

After their father's death Esau and Jacob parted with the best of feeling because they were so rich in flocks and herds and servants that the land could not sustain two such large tribes. Jacob continued to live quietly at Hebron as the head of his family, in touch with everything that went on, but leaving the actual work to be done by others. He had a great number of servants and his ten older sons were in charge of his vast flocks and herds.

Joseph was his especial favorite among his sons, and Jacob showed his preference in ways that were perhaps not wise. For one thing, he gave him a very handsome coat which distinguished him from his brothers. Then he did not send him to tend the flocks and herd the cattle, but kept him at home with himself and his little brother Benjamin.

Jacob's sons were not slow to notice their father's fondness for Joseph and it made them

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angry. They were all older than he and had served their father faithfully for many years, while Joseph was only seventeen years old. Another thing made them angry. Joseph used to have dreams and tell them to his brothers in what they thought was a boastful way. Their jealousy and anger grew to hatred and they talked over plans for getting rid of him.

At this time Jacob's flocks of sheep were at quite a distance from Hebron, cared for by the ten older sons. Wishing to know how they prospered, Jacob sent Joseph to inquire if all was well with them. So Joseph set out on his errand and found his brothers in the pasture-lands of Dothan.

When his brothers saw him coming they decided to get rid of him in some way. Their hearts were full of hatred and they deliberately planned to kill their brother. One thing after another was suggested until at last they decided to leave him in a deep, dry water-cistern to starve to death.

Reuben, the eldest son, intended to get Joseph

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out of the cistern later and send him home to his father, but he was unable to do this, for in his absence his brothers sold Joseph to some merchants who came along just then.

These merchants took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, one of the officers of the King's household. Potiphar was very kind to Joseph, and as he grew up made him his steward or overseer. Jacob had very winning manners and in time rose to be the governor or ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Meanwhile Joseph's brothers had told their father that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast, and in proof they showed Jacob his son's handsome coat, which they had taken from him and dipped in blood for this purpose. Jacob mourned long and bitterly for Joseph, and then he and his sons lived on much as they had been doing until there was a famine in the land and no food was to be had.

Then Jacob sent his ten older sons to Egypt to buy corn, for it was plentiful there. He would not let Benjamin go, however, fearing

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that some harm might come to him. When Reuben and his brothers reached Egypt they were taken to Joseph, the governor, who recognized them at once, but pretended to think they were spies. They protested in vain that they had been sent by their father to buy food and that this was their only errand.

Joseph asked them if they had any other brothers, and they told him there was one more, Benjamin, the youngest. Then Joseph told them to go home and come back again bringing Benjamin with them, and that he would keep Simeon, one of their number, until they did this.

So back they went with their sacks full of corn which Joseph had allowed them to buy, and told their father what the governor had said and done. At first Jacob refused to let them take Benjamin away from him, but when the corn they had brought home was all gone he consented.

Once more the brothers stood before the governor of Egypt and this time Benjamin was with them. After questioning them once more,

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letting them start on their homeward journey, and then bringing them back again, Joseph told them who he was and how he had been prospered. He gave them food and money and clothes and sent them back to Hebron. He also told them to bring back their father Jacob and gave them wagons in which to bring his goods.

Pharaoh, the King, also sent an invitation to Jacob, and in time he and his sons and their families went to Egypt and were given the fertile land of Goshen for their home. They were put in charge of all the King's flocks and herds and became very prosperous.

But before agreeing to this change of home Jacob asked God if he should go to Egypt. God told him to go, and on the way his long-lost son Joseph met him and took him to Pharaoh, who received him very kindly.

Jacob and his sons lived peaceably in Egypt for seventeen years, and then Jacob died at the age of a hundred and forty-seven years. But before he died he blessed Joseph's two sons and

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made him promise to bury him in the family sepulchre, the cave of Machpelah.

As the end approached, Jacob blessed all his twelve sons and foretold what their lives would be, bestowing a peculiar blessing upon his third son, Judah, from whose descendants should be born the Saviour of his people.

Jacob's body was embalmed and carried to the land of Canaan, attended by his twelve sons, and a great company of Pharaoh's household and buried in the cave of Machpelah.



## THE FAVORITE SON.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

**A** GREAT many years ago, in that far-away country which we now call Palestine, there lived a little boy who grew up to be one of the best and wisest men the world has ever known. His name was Joseph and his father's name was Jacob, the man to whom God had promised not only the beautiful land in which he and his children lived, but that he should be the father of a great nation. The name of Joseph's mother

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was Rachel, and she died when his little brother Benjamin was born.

Jacob had twelve sons, but of them all he loved Joseph best. The Bible says he gave him a "coat of many colors," meaning a much richer and better coat than his brothers wore. It was not often such a coat was given to a boy, and in it Joseph looked like a young prince.

Joseph's brothers, with the exception of Benjamin, who was too young to be jealous of him, were very much offended at this special mark of Jacob's favor. They considered that their father treated them very unfairly in preferring Joseph to them.

At this time Joseph was about seventeen years old. He was grateful to his father for all his kindnesses, and all through his life he never forgot them. He was the kind of boy who was always thinking and dreaming wonderful things. He was very much interested in his dreams and could see no harm in them, but he talked too much about them.

You must understand that, in those days a



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man's riches consisted in his flocks of sheep and his herds of cattle. His sons were his servants for a certain number of years, and then they were given cattle and sheep in payment of their services, and were allowed to do as they pleased with them, while their sons in turn became servants to them. Jacob's older sons tended his sheep and cattle, while Joseph and Benjamin lived with their father in his tent.

There was other work to do besides tending the flocks and herds. At harvest-time Joseph worked in the fields, for no one could be idle then. Father and sons and servants worked together, cutting the grain and binding and stacking the sheaves.

It is easy to think of Joseph after a day spent in the fields, eating his supper, and then, as night began to fall and the stars came peeping out one by one, laying himself down upon the skins and mats which formed his bed. The active little brain thought over the events of the day until a deep, sweet sleep closed his eyes. Even then the picture of the field did not pass

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away, and the little boy seemed back again among the yellow sheaves working with his brothers. Then, as each bound his sheaf, Joseph's arose and stood upright, and all his brothers' sheaves stood up and then bowed down to it as if they were paying homage to a king. Joseph told this dream to his brothers and it made them very indignant.

Then Joseph dreamed again that the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowed down to him, and he told this dream to his father and to his brothers. No wonder his father reproved him again, and as for his brothers they were angrier than ever, for it seemed as if they, who were older and wiser than he, were to bow down and serve him.

"Shalt thou indeed reign over us?" they sneered. "Shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" And then they hated him more than ever. They talked a great deal among themselves about the way Jacob preferred Joseph to them. "We have worked hard for our father," they would say, "and yet he loves this boasting

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boy more than he does us.” They wanted to get rid of Joseph, and one day their opportunity came.

In search of good feeding-places for their flocks, Joseph’s brothers had driven them quite a long way from Hebron, where their father lived in his tent. They had been gone a long time and Jacob was anxious to know if all was well with them. After a while he determined to send Joseph to the place where they were, which was called Shechem. So he called the boy and told him where his brothers were, that he was to go and visit them, and then bring back an account of what they were doing.

Joseph’s answer was, “Here am I!” by which he meant that he was all ready to start.

Poor Jacob! If he could only have known the evil thoughts that were in the hearts of his elder sons, he would have kept the boy by his side.

So, wearing his prince’s coat, and with a wallet of food slung across his shoulders, Joseph set forth to find his brothers. It took him some

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time to go from Hebron, where he parted from his father, to Shechem, and when at last he did get there, instead of his brothers he met a man who told him there had not been enough food for so many sheep in Shechem, and that his brothers had driven their flocks to the pastures of Dothan. So Joseph thanked the man and set out once more on his errand.

All unconscious of the great wrong to be done him, Joseph drew near to Dothan. He could see great flocks and herds grazing peacefully, but he could not distinguish his brothers by their faces. They had seen the bright little figure coming towards them, however, and knew who it was.

“Behold this dreamer cometh!” one of the brothers called out while Joseph was yet some distance from them, and that allusion to his dreams roused all their bitterest feelings toward their brother. They could not bear his dreams, his airs of superiority, as they deemed them, any longer, so they began to plan how to get rid of him.

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At first they decided to kill him and throw his body into one of the dry pits or cisterns used for storing rain-water in the rainy season. They could then report that a beast had devoured him.

Reuben, the eldest brother, was a little less heartless than the others. He felt that he was responsible to his father for the boy's safety, and so, without seeming to oppose his brothers, he suggested that they put him into the pit and let him starve to death. His thought was to get him out of the pit and send him back to his father when night came and his brothers were all asleep. This was agreed to and when he had seen Joseph stripped of his handsome coat and let down into the pit, he went away on some pretext, lest his brothers should suspect what was in his mind.

It is not pleasant to think how Joseph must have felt when, in place of the loving greeting he had looked forward to, he met, instead, fierce looks and cruel hands. Probably he cried for mercy as he was dragged towards the pit, and

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begged his brothers to spare his life. But hate, that poisonous thing, was in the hearts of Joseph's brothers. They had him in their power—this dreamer who boasted that he would one day rule over them. That dream should never come to pass, and so Joseph was let down into the pit and left to perish.

The place where these cruel brothers had camped was on the caravan road into Egypt, and very soon after Reuben had left his brothers a company of merchants passed by.

Men and women and children were bought and sold as slaves in those days; and the idea of disposing of Joseph in that way occurred to one of the brothers, whose name was Judah, as the caravan drew nearer. He suggested that they could get rid of Joseph more safely by selling him and having him carried away into distant Egypt, than by leaving him in the pit to starve. Finally, his brothers agreed to Judah's plan and Joseph was drawn out of the pit and offered for sale to the merchants, who bought him for "twenty pieces of silver"—

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about ten dollars of our money. Think of it! The loved and honored son of a rich man, such as Jacob was, sold as a slave by his brothers because they were jealous of him and hated him!

When Reuben, who did not know of this, came back and found Joseph was not in the pit, he was in great distress and wondered what he would say to his father on his return. He tore his clothes, which was the Eastern form of mourning, and wept aloud. Perhaps he was married and had sons of his own, and so could understand how hard it would be to lose a dear son.

At first, his brothers would not tell him what they had done with the boy, for they feared he would pursue the merchants and bring him back, but at last they told him what they had done, and persuaded him to join them in a scheme to deceive their father. They killed a kid and dipped Joseph's coat in it, and very likely tore it in places and made it dirty. Then they took it to their father and made him believe that



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some beast had killed Joseph. Jacob mourned long and bitterly for his son, while, all unknown to him or the cruel brothers, Joseph, tied upon one of the patient camels of the Ishmaelitish merchants, was nearing the end of his journey into Egypt.

At last the caravan reached the city where Pharaoh, King of Egypt, lived in royal splendor, and crowds of strange Egyptian people flocked to the merchants to inspect their goods. The heart of the Hebrew boy must have been very sad as he looked into the faces of the buyers, wondering to whom he would be sold, and if his master would be harsh or kind. After a while, Potiphar, one of the King's most trusted officers, bought Joseph and took him to his house.

Potiphar was a good and just man, and treated Joseph with great kindness. After the first grief of being separated from his father was over, he became reconciled to his lot. His master was very fond of him, and in time gave him the entire management of his household and of

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all his affairs. So Joseph grew up to be a strong, handsome man, loved and trusted by all.

About this time, Potiphar's wife told wicked stories to her husband about Joseph, and Potiphar had Joseph put into prison. Two of Pharaoh's servants were also in the prison. They were the chief butler and the chief baker.

Joseph used to visit these men, and one morning he found them very sad because of their remarkable dreams. The butler had dreamed that he saw a vine with three branches, from which he took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup into the King's hand. Then Joseph told the butler the dream meant that, in three days, Pharaoh would take him out of prison and make him butler again. He asked the butler to ask the King to take him out of prison, for he had done nothing wrong.

Then the baker told his dream. He said he was carrying three white baskets with baked meats for Pharaoh, on his head, and the birds came and fed on the meats. Joseph told him the dream meant that, in three days, Pharaoh

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would hang him on a tree, and that the birds of the air should eat his flesh.

And it all came about as Joseph had said. The butler was restored to favor, and the baker was hanged. Strange to say the butler forgot to ask the King to take Joseph out of prison, and he had to stay there for two years more.

Then Pharaoh began to have strange dreams which none of the wise men in his kingdom could interpret, and then the chief butler remembered that the young Hebrew in prison had told him exactly what his dream had meant. So he told Pharaoh about him and Joseph was sent for in great haste. The King told him he had heard that he could interpret the meaning of dreams. Joseph would not allow that the power was his and said: "It is not in *me*. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Then Pharaoh told his dreams; how he had stood on the bank of the river and seen seven fat kine, or cows, come up out of it, and they fed in the meadow. Then seven very thin cows came after them and ate up the fat cows. Aft-

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erwards, he dreamed that he saw seven good full ears of corn, and seven very poor withered ears that ate up the good ones.

Joseph told the King that the two dreams meant the same thing, and that God had sent the dreams to show him what was going to happen in Egypt. He explained that the seven fat kine and the seven good ears of corn meant seven years of great plenty; while the seven poor kine and the seven withered ears meant seven years of famine. These were to come after the years of plenty and eat them up.

Then Joseph advised Pharaoh as to what he should do during the seven years of plenty. He told him to put some wise man over the whole land of Egypt, who would see that great quantities of corn should be grown and placed in storehouses, so that when the time of want came the people might not starve. When he had finished speaking, Pharaoh said to Joseph: "There is no man so wise and discreet as thou art. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt."

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Then the King put his own ring on Joseph's hand, dressed him in fine clothes, with a gold chain around his neck, and made him ride in one of his own chariots. He also gave him a second name which means a "revealer of secrets" and gave him the daughter of the priest—or prince—of the city of On, for his wife. Joseph was only thirty years old when he was made ruler over the whole land of Egypt, and only Pharaoh, the King, was greater than he.

Then everything came to pass as Joseph had foretold. For seven years the harvests were so abundant that in every district the people had plenty to eat and to spare. The corn was like the sand of the sea for quantity, and Joseph had it gathered and stored up in the cities against the time of want. Then the years of famine began. The harvests were blighted and the people were hungry. Not only in Egypt, but from all the lands around, people came to buy corn from Joseph.

After a while there was great want in Canaan,

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where Jacob and his sons lived. Then they heard there was corn in Egypt and Jacob sent his elder sons there to buy food. He kept Benjamin at home, fearing if he let him go some harm might befall him. So the ten older brothers came to Egypt and bowed low before the governor, not knowing that he was their own brother.

But Joseph recognized his brothers at once. Yet he spoke roughly to them, accusing them of being spies. He asked them questions about their home, and they told him they were twelve brothers, ten of them there, one at home with their old father, "and one," said they, thinking of the brother to whom they had been so cruel, "*one is not.*" Still Joseph pretended not to believe them and put them in prison for three days, but at the end of this time he told them that he did not wish to punish them without cause, so he would keep Simeon, one of them, and the others might go home, taking plenty of food with them. But they must come back again and bring Benjamin with them or he would not re-

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lease Simeon. 'And each man's money was by Joseph's orders put in the top of his sack.

On their way home, the brothers stopped at an inn and opening their sacks to feed their beasts they found the money. However, they got home and told their father all that the governor of Egypt had said and done to them, also that they could not go back there to buy food unless they took Benjamin with them. But Jacob refused to part with his youngest son. "Joseph is not," he said, "and Simeon is not, and you want to take Benjamin away. All these things are against me."

But after the corn they had brought from Egypt was eaten up, Jacob consented to let Benjamin go with his brothers on their next journey. They must have food and there was nowhere else where it could be bought but in Egypt. So once more they stood before Joseph, who was very glad to see Benjamin again. He sent them to his own house and had a great dinner prepared for them, sending Simeon from the prison, so that all the brothers might be to-

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gether. Water was brought to wash their feet and food for their beasts was provided.

When Joseph joined them they gave him a present which their father had sent and Joseph asked them: "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke?" And they replied: "He is well." Again he asked: "Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake to me?" and when they said it was, he could not keep back his tears and went away into his own room and wept.

After he had returned with no traces of tears on his face, he made his brothers sit down at table according to their ages. They thought it strange he should know their ages, but they did as they were told, and soon forgetting their fears ate and drank and were merry.

The next morning the eleven brothers started for home, their sacks once more filled with corn, but by Joseph's order the purchase-money was put back as before, while in Benjamin's sack he had his own silver cup placed. But before they had gone far Joseph sent his steward to



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ask why they had stolen his master's silver cup. They all protested that they knew nothing about it; but in spite of their denials the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then, full of grief, they hurried back to Joseph, protesting their innocence and saying that if Benjamin were not allowed to go home with them their father would die of sorrow.

Then Joseph could not contain himself any longer. He sent every one from the room where they were except his brothers and then he told them he was their brother Joseph. Then he kissed them and wept over them and forgave them all they had done to him. "God sent me here to save your lives," he told them, and then he added, "Go to my father, and tell him that God hath made me lord over all Egypt. Tell him to come here with you, and you shall all dwell in the land of Goshen."

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers were with him, he, too, told them that all the family must come and live in Egypt.

What must have been Jacob's feelings when

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His eleven sons returned and told him that his long-lost son Joseph was not only alive but rich and powerful. At first he could not believe it, but once convinced that Joseph was alive he prepared to see him as soon as possible. It made quite an imposing cavalcade as it set forth. There were Jacob and his sons, with their wives and children and all their household goods. At Beersheba, where they halted to offer a sacrifice to the Most High, God revealed himself in a vision to Jacob and told him not to be afraid to go down into the land of Egypt, for He would be with him, and in due time his descendants should be brought back to the land He had promised to give him.

When word was brought to Joseph that his father's company was nearing the land of Goshen, which lay on the borders of Egypt, he drove there in his chariot, and father and son met after their long separation. Then the journey was continued, and Jacob and five of his sons were presented to Pharaoh, who welcomed them very kindly and received Jacob's blessing.

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For seventeen years Jacob lived peacefully in Goshen, and then at the age of one hundred and forty-seven years he died and was buried in the land of Canaan as he had requested.

After the death of their father, Joseph's elder brothers began to fear that he would yet punish them for the harm they had done him in his youth. But when they spoke of this to him, Joseph reassured them, and told them that God would certainly carry out His promise to their father that they or their descendants should have the land of Canaan. And he also told them that when that time came his remains must be carried to that country.

Joseph lived to be one hundred and ten years old. When Joseph died his body was embalmed and kept in Egypt, until Moses led the Children of Israel into the Land of Promise. It was eventually buried in the cave of Machpelah beside his father.

Any one who visits the city of London, in England, may see on the Embankment, a tall obelisk called "Cleopatra's Needle." This mon-

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ument, though not constructed when Jacob's descendants left Egypt, stood for fifteen hundred years at On, the city where Jacob's wife lived before he married her. For many reasons it is a great curiosity, not the least of them being that it easily recalls the story of Joseph, The Favorite Son. .



## THE ADOPTED SON

### THE STORY OF MOSES

**A** BRAHAM, a descendant of Shem, one of the sons of Noah, was the father and founder of the great Israelitish, or Hebrew, nation. God chose him from all the people living on the earth at that time, for this purpose, promising that He would make his name great and that his descendants should have for their own the land of Canaan, a country in Palestine lying west of the river Jordan and the Dead Sea.

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Abraham had a son named Isaac, who became the father of Jacob, and Jacob was the father of twelve sons, among whom was Joseph.

Jacob, with his eleven sons and their families, settled in Egypt at the invitation of Joseph, and after the death of their father his sons continued to live there, and became prosperous. After the death of Joseph they increased rapidly in numbers, and from shepherds and herders of flocks became masters of various crafts and occupations. At this time they began to be called "The Children of Israel."

They lived in towns and villages in the land of Goshen, on the eastern border of Egypt, industrious and contented. The king who had been so friendly to Joseph was now dead, and another Pharaoh ruled the land. He watched with much distrust the growing wealth and greatness of the children of Israel and soon he began to treat the poor Israelites like slaves. Under the direction of his officers he set them at work making bricks and then had them build two cities to hold his treasures.

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From a prosperous people they were now reduced to the condition of common laborers, working without pay day after day in the burning heat of that country.

But in spite of their hardships the Israelites increased in numbers, and, to further crush them, Pharaoh ordered that all their boys should be destroyed as soon as they were born. But the people would not obey this order, and then Pharaoh commanded that all boys should be flung into the Nile, the sacred river of Egypt, immediately after their birth.

At this time a child was born among the Israelites whose life was to be one of the most remarkable that history has recorded for us. His father's name was Amram and his mother's Jochebed, and they belonged to the tribe of Levi, the third son of Jacob. They had two older children, a son named Aaron and a daughter named Miriam.

The mother of this little boy managed to keep him out of sight for three months, and then she made a little boat of the water-reeds called pa-

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pyrus, fastening them together with clay and pitch. It was not much more than a basket, but she put the baby into it and placed it among the rushes at the edge of the river Nile, leaving her daughter Miriam to see what became of her baby brother.

The Egyptians had many beliefs which appear very strange to us now. One of them was that anything surrounded by papyrus would be safe from the crocodiles which infested the river. Possibly Jochebed had some faith in this superstition, for during the time when the Israelites were living contentedly in the land of Goshen, many of them had fallen into the customs of the Egyptians, worshipping Ra, the sun-god, Apis, the sacred calf, and others of their national deities.

While Miriam was watching the little boat and its precious burden, the daughter of Pharaoh, with her attendants, came to the river to bathe. She saw the little boat floating among the rushes and ordered it to be brought to her. As she looked down at the baby it cried, and, while she



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must have known that it was the child of Israelitish parents, her heart went out to it in pity, and she declared that she would bring it up as if it had been her own child.

Miriam then came forward and asked if she might find a nurse for the child. The princess sent her on this errand and the little girl hastened to bring her mother.

When the baby had grown to be quite a boy the princess took him to her palace and treated him as if he had been a son of her own. She named him Moses, which means "drawn out," because she had taken him from the water.

Then the princess had him trained and taught as though he were really to be a prince. He was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and became learned and powerful.

But the misery and degradation of his own people appealed to him more strongly than the splendor and preferments of the Egyptian court. His spirit was especially stirred one day when he saw an Egyptian overseer abusing an Israelite in the fields.

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In his anger at this sight he killed the Egyptian and buried the body in the sand. The next day he interfered in another quarrel—this time between two of his own people, but all he received for his efforts as peacemaker was the knowledge that they knew he had killed the Egyptian the day before.

For this reason, and also because Pharaoh suspected him of scheming to deliver the Israelites from their bondage, Moses felt that his life was not safe in Egypt, so he left the court and went to the land of Midian. He was then forty years old.

One day when he was resting by the side of a well, the seven daughters of Jethro, the chief and priest of Midian, came there to water their father's sheep. Some shepherds, who also wanted to use the well, drove them away, but Moses took the part of the maidens and watered their flocks for them.

When Jethro heard of this he invited Moses to be his shepherd and to live in his house. Moses accepted the home offered him, and in

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time married Zipporah, one of Jethro's daughters. They had two sons, one named Gershom, a word which means "stranger," and Eliezer, or "God is my help."

For the next forty years Moses led the life of a shepherd in the land of Midian, in gradual preparation for the great work he was to do later. He certainly learned patience and must have become familiar with the country through which he was to lead the children of Israel when the time of their deliverance from Egypt came. During this time the afflictions of the Israelites had been increased. Another Pharaoh ruled the land, but his reign brought no relief to the nation toiling under cruel taskmasters.

One day Moses was feeding his flocks on a mountain called Horeb, when he saw a bush of wild thorn, or acacia, apparently on fire. He looked more closely but could see no smoke, neither were the leaves and twigs blackened or consumed.

Then a Voice which seemed to come from the bush called, "Moses, Moses." Understanding

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that it was the Voice of God, Moses answered, "Here am I." Then God told him to come no nearer, and to take off his shoes and stand with bare feet, for His presence made the spot holy ground.

Moses tremblingly obeyed and stood with covered face while God told him that He had heard the cries and seen the affliction of the children of Israel, and that He would set them free from their bondage in Egypt. He told Moses that He had chosen him to be the deliverer of His people and their leader to the land of Canaan, which He had promised to Abraham.

Moses felt unequal to this great undertaking and tried to excuse himself on various grounds. He said that the Israelites would not listen to him unless he could, by means of signs and wonders, convince them that he was the divinely appointed leader, and he also said that he was not a ready speaker.

But God told him just what he had to do and that his brother Aaron should be his spokesman. He bestowed upon him the power to do

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wonderful things and promised His own protection and help. Moses could refuse no longer, and accepted the divine commission. Then the Voice ceased, the vision of the burning bush faded away, and Moses was alone again with his flocks.

When Moses returned to his home he told Jethro that he wished to go to Egypt, and in the speech of those days Jethro replied, "Go in peace." So Moses set out on his journey and on the way met his brother Aaron, whom God had sent to meet him.

Then Moses related to Aaron all that God had said to him from the burning bush, told him the part he was to take in God's plan, and showed him the rod which he was to use in performing the wonderful things by which the Israelites were to be convinced that he was their divinely appointed deliverer from the land of Egypt. Then the two brothers went on their way together.

As soon as Moses and Aaron arrived in Egypt, they called the people together and told

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them that God was going to deliver them from their bondage and give them the land of Canaan. At first the Israelites were very thankful for the message, but after the first failure of Moses to get Pharaoh's consent to let them go they began to doubt it.

Then Moses and Aaron went a second time to Pharaoh. Aaron threw down his rod and it became a serpent. The magicians of the court did the same thing, and threw down their rods, which became serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed theirs. In spite of this the King once more refused to let the people go.

Then, one after another, God sent terrible plagues upon the Egyptian people to show Pharaoh that He was the one Living and True God and that the children of Israel must be allowed to go to the land He had promised them.

The first of these plagues was the changing of the waters of the Nile into blood. The Egyptians were a very cleanly people, paying great attention to their bodies, and were generally dressed in white. They were accustomed

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to bathe in the Nile, and its appearance at this time must have filled them with loathing. But Pharaoh again refused to let the people go.

Then one after another eight more plagues were sent upon the land. They were equally disgusting to such a people and gave them the greatest discomfort possible, but, while Pharaoh relented from time to time, he persisted in his refusal to let the children of Israel depart from his kingdom.

During all this time the land of Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was exempt from these inflictions. Pharaoh must have known this and he must have begun to understand that their God punished those who refused to do as He told them, but he was obstinate and still refused his consent. It required another and a more severe judgment before Pharaoh consented to let the children of Israel go.

It was now the month of Nisan or Abib, which means the "month of green ears," and in consequence of what occurred at that time Abib has ever since been the first month of the

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Hebrew sacred year. By God's command the blood of a lamb was to be sprinkled upon the sides and top of the doorway to every Israelitish home. The lamb itself was to be roasted and eaten by the family, who were to be dressed for a journey and ready to start on it at a moment's notice.

At midnight the tenth and last judgment fell on the Egyptians. A wail of anguish rose from every home in the land, for the first-born child in every home lay dead. The angel of death had entered the palace of the King and the hovel of his poorest subject alike, sparing only the homes where the blood-sprinkled doorways told of God's protection.

Convinced at last that he could not successfully combat the God of the Israelites, Pharaoh now begged Moses to hasten their departure, and the Egyptian people were so anxious to have them out of the land that they gave them jewels and clothing to induce them to go quickly.

So the whole Israelitish nation—some six



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hundred thousand men without counting the women and children—set forth, on foot and in the night, under the leadership of Moses, for the land of Canaan. With them they took the coffin containing the embalmed body of Joseph, which had been carefully kept in Egypt since his death. And God showed them the way they were to go by having a cloud move before them in the daytime, and gave it the appearance of fire at night.

The shortest way to the Promised Land, which lay along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, led through the country of the Philistines, a warlike people who afterwards became the inveterate enemies of the Israelites, but with whom they were not now able to contend. So they traveled in a southeasterly direction until they came to that part of the Red Sea which is now called the Gulf of Suez.

Pharaoh in the meanwhile had recovered from his terror and remorse, and with a mighty army was pursuing the Israelites, intending to take them back to Egypt. He first came in sight of

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them encamped upon the African border of the Gulf. When the Israelites knew that they were pursued they turned angrily upon Moses and Aaron for taking them away from Egypt.

Then Moses lifted his rod and stretched it out over the waters, and God sent a strong east wind which forced them back and left a passage for the wandering people to cross to the other shore. So on they marched in the fury of the storm, while Pharaoh and his host were overwhelmed by the waters, which rushed back again after the children of Israel had reached the further side.

Then the Israelites broke out into songs of praise and thanksgiving to God, who had so marvelously preserved them from Pharaoh's anger, led by Miriam, the sister of Moses, the one who had watched him as a baby in his little papyrus boat among the rushes on the bank of the Nile.

During the next three days of their journey no water was found. Then they came to a well, but the water was not fit to drink. Again they

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found fault with Moses, but he threw a tree which God showed him into the well and the water at once became sweet and good.

Before long they were traveling in a desert country and their stock of food gave out. As before, the Israelites accused Moses of having led them from Egypt to die in the wilderness. But God sent them great flocks of quails, upon which they fed, and covered the ground every morning with a curious substance, round and white, which was good to eat. In wonder the Israelites exclaimed "Man-hu?" which meant "What is it?" and so this mysterious food began to be called manna.

Then they got out of the desert and camped at a place called Rephidim. But here there was no water, and the people became so angry with Moses that they were ready to kill him. Then God told Moses to strike one of the rocks with his rod and water poured out in abundance.

Then a new trouble came upon the wandering nation. A people called the Amalekites at-

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tacked them, and for the first time since leaving Egypt they were obliged to defend themselves by fighting.

Moses chose a young man named Joshua to be the leader of a selected band and sent him to do battle for the children of Israel, while he held up his hands in prayer to God to help His people. So long as Moses' hands were uplifted Joshua was victorious, but when from weariness he let them fall then the Amalekites prevailed. So Aaron on one side and Hur on the other supported his weary arms and at sunset Joshua had won the battle.

Shortly after this Moses was visited by Jethro, his father-in-law, who brought with him Moses' wife and two sons, who had remained with him in Midian for safety. Moses welcomed them and told Jethro all the wonderful things God had done for His people. Then Jethro said, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods."

From Rephidim the Israelites passed into the desert of Sinai and from the top of Mount

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Sinai God gave Moses a message for them. Among clouds from which lightning gleamed and thunder muttered, Moses was given the Ten Commandments, which were to be kept by the Israelites and their children, and laws which they were to observe.

A second time Moses was called to communion with God on Mount Sinai, and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of the children of Israel were permitted to accompany him a part of the way, while he and Joshua, the young leader of the Israelites in their first battle, went on further.

After waiting for six days Moses went alone nearer to the top of the mountain and staid there forty days and forty nights while God disclosed to him His purposes regarding the children of Israel, and delivered into his hands two tables or tablets of stone upon which He had graven the Ten Commandments.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai a strange sight met his eyes. In his absence the fickle Israelites had persuaded Aaron to

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make them an idol such as they had seen in Egypt and which they could worship. They had given Aaron their jewels of gold and he had made of them a golden calf, to which they were now bowing down and offering sacrifices. In his anger Moses cast the tablets of stone from him and in their fall they were broken.

Then after reproaching Aaron for what he had done, Moses destroyed the golden calf by fire and by grinding it to powder, and strewed the ashes and powder upon water, which he made the Israelites drink.

Then he stood at the gate of the camp and called for all those who were on the Lord's side to come and stand beside him. The children of Levi, the third son of Jacob, answered this call, and Moses told them to go through the camp and slay every man they met. This they did, and three thousand Israelites fell at that time.

After this God told Moses to make two tablets of stone like those he had broken, and with them come alone to Him on Mount Sinai, where He would engrave upon them the words

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which were on the first tablets. Moses did this, and when he came down from the mountain his face shone so that Aaron and the people were afraid to speak to him until he had covered it with a vail.

For more than a year the Israelites remained near Mount Sinai, and during that time Moses told them, among other things which God had imparted to him, how the Tabernacle was to be made, who its priests were to be, and how the services were to be conducted. The people brought him all the material they had that was suitable for those purposes, and skilful men built the beautiful and costly Tabernacle, in which was placed the Ark of the Covenant, which they were also instructed to make.

Aaron was appointed high priest and his four sons were made priests to assist him in the services. The Sabbath or seventh day was to be strictly kept, and various feasts and ceremonies were instituted. Particularly the feast of the Passover was enjoined upon the Israelites to commemorate God's mercy in passing

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over their homes when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain.

Then the pillar of cloud, which, with the pillar of fire, had never ceased to show the Israelites the way they were to go in their journeys, rested over the Tabernacle, and at this sign that they were to resume their march to the land of Canaan, the children of Israel marched forth once more and in time came to Kadesh-barnea, near the borders of the promised land.

Then a man was chosen from each of the twelve tribes to see what the land of Canaan was like and to find the best way of entering it. They were gone for forty days, and when they returned their accounts differed. All agreed as to the exceeding fruitfulness of the land, in proof of which they brought back a bunch of grapes so large that it took two men to carry it. But only two advised an immediate advance into the land. These were Joshua, the young general, and a man named Caleb.

The ten remaining messengers frightened the people by their account of the giants and war-



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like tribes they would have to encounter and the many dangers that would have to be met, and the people, fickle as ever, believed these reports and again reproached their faithful leader.

But their punishment was swift and severe. The ten messengers of evil died on the spot, and God commanded Moses to tell the people that, for their doubting and faultfinding, not one of them over twenty years old except Joshua and Caleb should enter the land of Canaan. Their children might do so, but they could never set foot in it. They were to wander in the desert until they died.

After thirty-eight years the wandering nation, which during this time had been fed with manna and so cared for by God that they were neither footsore, neither did their clothes wear out, was again encamped at Kadesh-barnea. In the interval great numbers of the people had died, and here Miriam, the sister of Moses and of Aaron, died and was buried. Water was again scarce, and the people, as formerly,

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heaped reproaches upon Moses and Aaron, who asked God what to do.

God told them to speak to one of the rocks and it would produce water in plenty. Instead of doing exactly what they were told, Moses and Aaron first rebuked the people and then Moses struck the rock with his rod. An abundant supply of water followed, but for this act of disobedience and this display of irritation, both of the brothers were forbidden to enter the land of Canaan.

Before long Aaron died at the age of one hundred and twenty-three years and was buried in Mount Hor. After mourning him for thirty days, the people again broke out into discontent and in punishment were bitten by venomous serpents, which were sent among them for that purpose. Many died in this way, and then the people turned to Moses, who prayed to God in their behalf. God told Moses to make a serpent of brass and raise it upon a pole high above the heads of the people, and every one

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who looked upon this serpent, although he had been bitten, was healed at once.

At last the Israelites came within sight of their inheritance and Moses' work was nearly done. He appointed Joshua to succeed him and lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. Then he gathered the people together and made them an affectionate farewell address. He wrote down for them all the words of the laws which God had given him for them and gave them to the priest.

Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab onto a mountain from which he could look over the land of Canaan, which he was not to enter, and there he died. He was one hundred and twenty years old, yet we are told that his eyesight was undimmed. Where he was buried no one knows. The Bible says, "The Lord buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor."



## THE BOY GENERAL

### THE STORY OF JOSHUA

**T**HE children of Israel were in slavery to the Egyptians when Moses was divinely appointed to lead them from “the land of bondage.” They had increased rapidly in numbers since Jacob and his sons by the invitation of King Pharaoh had settled in the pleasant and fruitful land of Goshen, and naturally became a possible menace to the Egyptian monarchy. They were, therefore, reduced from a people

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living at ease to the condition of slaves, and were employed upon public works, such as the building of treasure cities, and as time went on came to be treated with a merciless tyranny. Their release was effected by Moses after the infliction of terrible plagues upon the Egyptians, and at last the nation set forth upon their journey to the land of Canaan, which had been promised by God to Abraham and his descendants.

Led by the "pillar of cloud" by day and "the pillar of fire" by night, the Israelites pursued their way over the long levels of uneven stony ground and sand, bearing with them the gold, silver, and jewels given by the Egyptians to hasten their departure. At length they came to that arm of the Red Sea called now the Gulf of Suez, where Moses extended his rod and a violent east wind caused the waters to recede on either side and afford a passage to the wandering nation. Then the wind ceased as suddenly as it had arisen, and the pursuing

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Egyptian army were overwhelmed in the rush of the waters to their former level.

Three days later the Israelites reached the well of Marah, only to find the water unfit to drink; but it was sweetened by Moses at the command of God, and, refreshed, the nation passed on. At one time resting under the shade of the palms of Elim, then facing the prospect of perishing from starvation, grumbling against their leader, and acclaiming him alternately, fed by the quails and the manna miraculously provided, and refreshed by the waters of Horeb, the chosen people were suddenly confronted by a wild, marauding tribe called the Amalekites, who resented the invasion of their country.

Untrained in war, the Israelites viewed the surrounding of their camp with dismay, but Moses, their undaunted leader, put a young man named Joshua in military command and told him to go out and fight the Amalekites, while he, attended by his brother Aaron and Hur, stood on the top of a hill with his arms

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extended in an attitude of supplication. The battle was fierce and obstinate. So long as Moses' arms were uplifted, the Israelites drove the enemy before them, but when from physical weariness he let them fall, the Amalekites prevailed. So Aaron on one side and Hur on the other supported his arms until sunset, when the victory of the Israelites was complete. This was the first time the Israelites were compelled to defend themselves by fighting, and young Joshua was the first commander of their fighting men.

Joshua was the son of a man named Nun, who belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. His selection by Moses indicates that he was possessed of great abilities as a soldier, which indeed his after-life proved. He certainly must have been a devout young man and one to be depended upon, for he accompanied Moses up Mount Sinai further than Aaron and his two sons and the seventy elders of Israel were allowed to go, and alone saw Moses depart by

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himself to the unseen and apparently inaccessible summit of the mountain.

Being the kind of man that he was Joshua must have studied carefully the character of the Israelitish people and deplored their fickleness. He must have seen the worship of the Golden Calf and the punishment of the idolaters, and then the remaining people bowing low in awe-struck adoration before the cloud of glory which stood by the door of the Tabernacle while their God and their leader communed within its walls. He must have heard and treasured in his mind the words of Moses, as given to him by God, relating to the moral, social, and political laws by which the Israelites were to be governed, and the ceremonies, feasts, and other institutions to be observed by them. The military order in which they marched and the discipline which prevailed among them were largely due to Joshua's efforts.

The spirit of discontent still lingered among the children of Israel, and at Taberah a fire broke out among their tents as a punishment



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from God, and was only extinguished at the prayer of Moses. They mutinied at another place because they were fed alone upon manna, and they were smitten with a plague in consequence. At length they arrived at Kadesh-barnea, a place near the southern frontier of the land of Canaan.

Here Moses, by God's command, sent one man from each tribe to cross the border, examine the land, and report upon the best way of entering it. Joshua was chosen from the tribe of Ephraim. These twelve chosen men, or spies as they are often called, were gone for forty days, and when they returned they had much to say in praise of the exceeding fruitfulness of the land, and in proof of it brought back specimens of its fruits, one of which was a bunch of grapes that required two men to carry it.

But ten of the men frightened the people by describing the fierce tribes, who would not abandon such a land without a desperate resistance. They told of giants and fortified cities, and their report so disheartened the Israelites

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that they were for going back to Egypt. Joshua and a man named Caleb, who was chosen from the tribe of Judah, were the only ones who advised that the nation should enter at once into their inheritance.

As usual, the Israelites blamed Moses for this state of affairs, and were ready to kill Joshua and Caleb for entreating them not to rebel against the Lord. But their punishment was swift, for God commanded Moses to tell them that for their distrust of His power to bring them into the land He had promised them, not one of them over twenty years of age except His faithful servants, Joshua and Caleb, should ever set foot in the land of Canaan. Forty years they were to wander in the wilderness — one year for each day the twelve spies were searching out the land.

So back into the desert Moses led them again, and for thirty-eight years their lives were much like those of other wandering tribes of the desert. During this time, however, a conspiracy was formed between two hundred and

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fifty princes of the tribes of Reuben and Levi. Dathan, Abiram, and On were descendants of Reuben, the oldest of Jacob's sons, and so claimed the right to the civil power held by Moses, while Korah, a descendant of Levi, the third son of Jacob, proposed to become High Priest instead of Aaron.

But the conspiracy came to naught, for, after inquiring of God what he should do, Moses told Korah and his company to appear on the next day before the Tabernacle with their censers lighted, for then God would show who were holy and who were not. So the following day Korah and his company did this, and sprinkled incense on the fire just as the priests were wont to do, and all who joined in the rebellion crowded around to see what the result would be. Moses had warned the remaining people to keep away from the rebellious ones, telling them that if these met with a strange death they would know that God was angry with them.

Then the earth suddenly opened and swal-

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lowed up Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and all who were with them. They went down alive, and those who looked on at this judgment of God fled from the sight. Then fire came down from heaven and consumed the two hundred and fifty princes who had followed Korah.

Then Moses at the command of God had one man from each of the twelve tribes bring him a rod upon which his name was written. These he put in the Tabernacle, and the next day the one which had Aaron's name upon it had blossomed and borne almonds. This rod God told Moses to put back into the Tabernacle again, to be kept as a perpetual memorial of His choice of Aaron and his descendants as high priests.

Again the Israelites came to Kadesh-barnea, and there Miriam, the sister of Moses, died, and there Moses was told by God that because of disobedience and distrust in His assistance, neither he nor Aaron would be allowed to enter the land of Canaan. After this the Israelites went by another route towards the promised

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land, and on the way Aaron died and was buried on Hount Hor.

After a while the Israelites came to the country of the Amorites and asked for a free passage through the dominions of their king, Sihon. This was denied, and the two nations fought a battle, which the Israelites won.

Then they encountered the Moabites, who were afraid of them, being fearful that the God of the Israelites was more powerful than their own gods. In his perplexity, Kalak, King of Moab, sent a message to Balaam, a man who had some reputation as a prophet, asking him to curse the children of Israel, so that he might conquer them. But God warned Balaam not to do this, and so Balaam sent word to Balak that he had been forbidden to do so by God.

Then Balak sent men of higher rank, who promised Balaam great rewards if he would curse the children of Israel, but Balaam told them he could say nothing but what God told him to say. That night God told him to go to the King of Moab, and the next day he set out.

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But God sent an angel to stop him, and the beast upon which he rode saw the angel standing with a drawn sword in his hand, and turned out of the way into a field and would not go straight forward. Balaam smote the beast because it had turned out of the way, but it refused to keep in the road and crushed Balaam's foot against a wall, so he smote it again. Then the angel stood in a narrow place where the beast could not turn to either side, and there it fell down. Again Balaam smote it with his staff, and then God gave the beast power of speech and it reasoned with Balaam, asking him if it had ever behaved in such a manner before. Then Balaam was able to see the angel, and confessed that he had sinned and offered to go back, but the angel told him to go on, but to say to Balak only the words that God had told him.

Balak received Balaam with great honors, but the prophet explained to him that he had no power to say anything except what he had been told by God to say. Then Balak took him

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to a hill sacred to the god of his country and there they offered sacrifices. Then Balaam went away by himself where God told him what to say to the King of Moab. When he returned, he blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them, so Balak took him to another place, from which he could see the whole array of Israelitish tents stretched across the plain to an immense distance, and again instead of cursing them he foretold their splendid fortunes and irresistible might. Three times in all Balaam blessed the children of Israel instead of cursing them, and then Balak sent him away.

When the end of the forty years drew nigh Moses gave the Israelites his final instructions, appointed Joshua as his successor, and then ascended Mount Nebo, from which he could look over the land he was forbidden to enter. There he died and was buried by God.

Then Joshua took the command and displayed great energy in preparing to enter the land of Canaan. The undertaking was not an easy one. The different kings of the country,

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were bound to each other by treaties, they had walled cities and fortresses and armies in which were many horses and chariots. But the Israelites were enthusiastic and ready to follow Joshua into the land which had been promised to them.

The first city to be conquered was Jericho, but before crossing the Jordan Joshua sent two men as spies to report on the strength of the city. They were discovered, but a woman named Rahab hid them under bundles of flax on the roof of her house and then let them down over the city wall with a rope. Before doing this she made them promise that when the city was taken her life and the lives of her relatives should be spared.

Early in the morning after the return of the spies, the Israelites marched to the Jordan, where they camped for three days. On the morning of the fourth day, at the command of Joshua, the priests took the Ark and marched forward, and as soon as their feet touched the water it parted before them and they walked to



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the middle of the river, where they stood with the Ark of the Covenant upon their shoulders. The people then walked over on dry ground as they had done through the Red Sea, and as soon as they had all passed over, the waters returned and covered the pathway.

The Israelites, now entered upon their inheritance, camped at a place called Gilgal, where the feast of the Passover was celebrated. At this time the daily supply of manna ceased. As Joshua left the camp to inspect the walls of Jericho, he saw a man standing with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua asked him whether he was for him or against him. The man replied, "As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come," and Joshua bowed down and worshipped Him, for He was God.

Then God told Joshua to have all the army of the Israelites march around the city once each day for six days, and the Ark was to be carried around likewise by the priests. Seven priests were to precede the Ark blowing upon trumpets made of rams' horns. On the seventh day all

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were to march around Jericho seven times with the priests blowing on the trumpets. Then all the Israelites were to shout, and the walls of Jericho would fall down and they could enter and take possession of the city. Joshua followed these instructions exactly and the city was taken in this way. The life of the woman who befriended the spies was saved, and also the lives of her relatives, as had been promised.

The valley in which the city of Jericho lay was a beautiful one. It had been a strongly fortified city and the residence of a king. Wheat ripened in this valley earlier than anywhere else in the country, and flax and hemp were also cultivated.

In the course of time Jericho was destroyed by the Roman Titus, but was afterward restored by Justinian. Again it was destroyed by the Arabs and once more rebuilt by the Crusaders. At this time all its former magnificence has disappeared, nothing remaining but a heap of ruins and a few miserable huts. Jericho is mentioned sixty-three times in the Old

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Testament and seven times in the New Testament. It was there that Jesus met Zacchæus and there He healed the blind man.

For five or six years Joshua led his army over the land of Canaan in a succession of victories, meeting with but one reverse, and that was caused by the sin of a man named Achan, who took for his own use some of the captured spoil, and for which offense he was put to death. Thirty-one kings were slain in this campaign and six nations destroyed.

The next step was to divide the land, and in this Joshua was as prudent and discreet as he had been brave and victorious on the battlefield. The distribution was made by drawing lots, each tribe receiving a portion. The tribe of Levi was provided for in a different way, as they were to be priests forever. The whole nation was charged with their support, and forty-eight towns with the land immediately surrounding them were assigned to them instead of an entire district.

Six of these towns were designated as "cities

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of refuge," where one might find shelter from the vengeance of an enemy whom he had unintentionally injured. Shechem was one of these towns, and here the Israelites buried the bones of Joseph, which had been preserved with the greatest care ever since they left the land of Egypt. It was in the valley where Shechem lay that Abraham reared his first altar to God, and in it were the fields which Jacob had once bought.

Shechem became the first capital of the Israelitish nation. They were now in the land which God had promised to give them and at last they were at peace. In the language of the country, each man dwelt under his own vine or his own fig tree, becoming a pious nation of husbandmen or farmers.

As time went on, Joshua, knowing that he had but a short time to live, bade farewell to the elders and chiefs of the Israelites, entreating them to love and serve God. He also gathered all the people together at Shechem, reviewed their wonderful history, and asked them to

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choose that day whom they would serve, adding, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;" and the people answered that they, too, would serve the Lord. Then Joshua made a covenant with them and wrote it in a book, and then he set up a great stone under an oak tree that stood by the Tabernacle, as a memorial that the people had promised to love and serve God.

Shortly after this Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten years and was buried at Timnath-serah, which had been given him as his personal inheritance, in Mount Ephraim.

Perhaps the most prominent characteristic of Joshua was his piety. He was a God-fearing commander to whom prayer and consecration were a necessary preparation for battle and danger. Nothing in his life, not even the confusion of camp or military duties, was allowed to interrupt religious devotions. He regarded the observance of God's commands as a condition of success in his undertakings, and when his victories were accomplished he reared

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altars in thankfulness to the God who had guided him.

Joshua may be termed a devout hero uniting mildness with strength and coolness with daring. He was modest, never lauding his achievements, giving credit for them to the God whom he loved and served. He was not a prophet or lawgiver like Moses, but he completed the work Moses began, of turning a nation of slaves into a people with a country. Very little is known of Joshua's life outside of the Bible records, but a writer in the sixth century tells us that there existed at that time in Mauritania an inscription in the Phœnician language in these words:

“We are they who fled from the face of Joshua, the robber, the son of Nun.”



## THE BOY AT SCHOOL

### THE STORY OF SAMUEL

**M**ANY years had passed since Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt into the Land of Promise. They had been kept together under Joshua, the successor of Moses, and during the lives of some of the elders who outlived him, but were now sharing the land with various heathen nations.

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Because of jealousy among the tribes, fear, laziness, and many other reasons, they had failed to exterminate these idolaters, as God had commanded them to do, and the result had been successive relapses into idolatries and successive subjections to the idolaters themselves.

Of these times the Bible narrative says: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Yet there was a form of government under Eli, the High Priest, and there were some who refused to bow the knee to idols, and continued to worship the God of their fathers.

Eli was sixty years old as he sat between the pillars of the gateway that led to the sanctuary where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. It was autumn, and from where he sat he could see the vineyards covering the sides of the fertile valley in which Shiloh lay. It was also the time of grape gathering, which was the time of holding the Feast of Bowers, a festival which attracted pilgrims and other strangers, besides



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the faithful ones who came there every year to worship God and offer sacrifices to Him.

Among these devout ones was Elkanah, a man who lived at Ramah in the hills of Ephraim, and his wife Hannah. They loved each other very dearly, but God had given them no children, and this was a great grief to Hannah. She longed to hear the patter of little feet, to have chubby arms clasp her neck, and little soft cheeks pressed to hers.

Her husband tried to comfort her, and doubtless did so, but Hannah never ceased to pray that God would give her a son, and so grant the one wish of her heart. Now she came into the Tabernacle, and Eli watched her as she stood with bowed head, eyes filled with tears, and moving lips from which no sound came, to offer to God *the first silent prayer* of which mention is anywhere made.

At last Eli approached the woman and asked her to tell him what troubled her. She told him what it was, and how she had been praying to God to give her a son, and how she had vowed to

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Him if He would do this and pardon her for any fault she had committed, she would devote the little one to His service as long as his life should last.

Then Eli comforted Hannah by praying himself to God to grant her petition. Then he told her to "go in peace," and she went away happy, for now she felt sure that God would answer her prayer. And He did. He sent her a little son whom she named Samuel, which means "asked of God."

Hannah did not go with her husband when the time for the Feast of Bowers came again. She stayed at their home in the hills with the little Samuel, while Elkanah and the remainder of his household went to Shiloh to offer to God their yearly sacrifices and vows.

Before Samuel was born his mother devoted him to the vows of a Nazarite. This word means "one separated," and was applied to one set apart from others for the service of God, either for a specified time or for life. Many persons were bound by these vows to

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service for a definite period, but the Bible tells us of only three who were pledged for life. These were Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

When Samuel was only a little boy, his mother decided that the time had come when she must put him under the care of Eli, the High Priest, that he might begin his life of service to God by waiting upon the priests when they offered sacrifices in the Tabernacle. So she and Elkanah went again to Shiloh, this time with the little boy for whom she had entreated God, and they took with them an offering of gratitude to Him.

As they came into the presence of the High Priest, Hannah said, "I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord, as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

So that which Hannah had vowed to do was done, and her heart was so full of love to God

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that she burst out into a song of praise and thankfulness. Then she left the child with Eli, but we may be very sure that her heart ached at parting from her little boy; but the Bible tells us that she made him a little coat and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

It is easy to imagine Samuel growing up into a gentle, obedient boy. At first, he must have missed his mother very much, but Eli was kind to him, and there were so many things to learn that he could not have had much time to be sad. And God comforted Hannah with three more sons and two daughters; so she must have been a happy woman, taking great pleasure in telling them of their little brother who was serving God with the High Priest at Shiloh.

Now Eli had two sons, who were grown men, but they were bad men who lived evil lives and did many things which they should not do. As time went on, God sent a messenger to Eli to reprove him because of the wickedness of his

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sons, and because he had not punished them for their wrong doing. He also told him that the judgment of God would come upon them, for they would both die in one day, and not one of his family would succeed him in the priesthood. But a faithful priest would be found, one who would serve God forever. Still Eli shrank from punishing his sons, and God sent another messenger to him. This time it was the little boy Samuel.

It was at night when Samuel first heard the voice of God, calling him by name. All was still in the Tabernacle, and dark, too, save for the dim lights of the seven-branched candlestick—the one which God had told Moses to make “of pure gold, and of beaten work”—in the sanctuary. “Samuel,” the Voice called and, thinking it was that of Eli, the little boy ran to him and said, “Here am I; for thou calledst me.”

But Eli answered, “I called not; lie down again.” So Samuel went back to his bed and lay down. Again the Voice called “Samuel,”

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and again the little boy ran to Eli, saying again, "Here am I; for thou didst call me;" and again Eli replied, "I called not, my son; lie down again."

Then God called to Samuel the third time, once more the little boy ran to Eli, insisting that he had called him. This time Eli told him it must have been the Voice of God that he had heard; to go back to his bed, and if the Voice called again he was to answer, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."

Samuel did as he was told, and soon the Voice was heard again. This time it called, "Samuel, Samuel," and, remembering what Eli had told him, the boy replied, "Speak; for thy servant heareth."

Then God told Samuel of the great punishment he was going to bring upon Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, and that the whole nation would suffer as well. Then all was still again, and Samuel lay quietly until morning came. Then he arose and opened the doors of the Tabernacle, for it was a part of his duties

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to see that this was done, so that those who came early to worship could enter.

Soon Eli called to the boy, "Samuel, my son," and Samuel answered, "Here am I." And then Eli asked him, "What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee?"

We can understand that it was very hard for the boy to tell Eli what God had said to him. He loved Eli and did not wish to give him pain, but he knew he must tell him, and so he repeated all that God had said. And poor old Eli bowed to the will of God, saying, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."

Yet quite a time passed before the promised punishment was inflicted. In the meantime Samuel grew up and it was known all over the land that God had chosen him to be a prophet. Sometimes God told him what was going to take place, and then Samuel would tell the people about it.

Then there came a time when the Israelites, the "Chosen People," as they liked to be called, had to resist an attack made upon them by

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the Philistines, the same people against whom Samson had waged such a great war. A battle was fought at a place called Aphek, and the Israelites were beaten, and about four thousand of them slain.

The chief men of Israel then consulted as to what should be done. They felt that God was offended. The army had fought bravely, but had been beaten by the Philistines, who worshipped idols. So they decided to take the Ark of the Covenant from the Tabernacle and send it to the camp, in the hope that its sacred presence would encourage the army and make it victorious in the next battle.

So the Ark of the Covenant, the most precious possession of the Israelites, was carried to the camp, attended by Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli. It was a chest covered with pure gold and had two rings on each side by which it could be carried. On the top was the mercy seat from which God had said He would commune with His people, and inside were the two tables of the law written by God Himself.



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The army greeted the arrival of the sacred Ark with a tremendous cheer. So loud was the shout that it reached the ears of the enemy and discouraged them, for they felt sure that the Ark of the Lord was in the camp of the Israelites. But this knowledge spurred them to redouble their exertions, and soon both armies were preparing for another battle.

When the next battle was fought, the Philistines were again victorious. The Israelites lost their faith in the power of the Ark to protect them, and fled in terror before their foes. Slaying them as they went, the Philistines swept on until they reached the Ark. They captured it and Hophni and Phinehas were both killed. In all, thirty thousand Israelites were slain in this battle.

It had been a day of great anxiety for Eli. He was ninety-eight years old, infirm and blind. For forty years he had judged Israel, and now he sat by the wayside waiting for news of the battle. The Bible says, "His heart trembled for the Ark of God."

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Then a messenger appeared and told Eli that he had come from the army, and the old man asked, "What is there done, my son?" So the man had to tell him the sad news; how the Israelites had been defeated with great slaughter, that his two sons were dead, and that the Ark of God was captured by the Philistines.

When Eli heard that the Ark of God was in the hands of the enemy he fell backwards from his seat, and in the fall his neck was broken and he died. So the word which God had spoken to Samuel was fulfilled.

The Philistines were very much pleased with having captured the Ark of God, for they thought it would bring good fortune to them. At first they sent it to their idol-temple in the city of Ashdod, and set it beside their god, Dagon, who had the head and hands of a man, with the body and tail of a fish.

But in the morning when the temple was opened, Dagon was found fallen on his face before the Ark. He was set back again, but the next morning not only was Dagon pros-

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trated again, but his head and hands were broken off and lay upon the threshold.

A painful disease then broke out among the people of Ashdod, and they began to think that the God of Israel was offended because His Ark was in their city. So they asked the chief men of the nation to have it sent somewhere else.

So these chief men sent the Ark to Gath, but God sent the same disease upon the people of Gath. Next, they took it to Ekron, but the Ekronites were afraid of it, and begged to have it sent away before they were all destroyed by sickness.

Ever since the Ark had been in the possession of the Philistines, it had brought nothing but misfortune to them; so there was a great consultation among the chief men and priests, and at last it was decided to send the Ark back to the Israelites. But they returned it in a very strange way.

They made a new cart, upon which they placed the Ark, and beside it was a chest in

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which they put an offering of gold and jewels. Then they yoked two cows to the cart and let them take whichever road they chose.

But straight toward the land of the Israelites the cows went with some of the chief men of the Philistines following them, and never once stopped until they came to a place called Beth-shemesh, where there was a great stone; and when those who followed the cart saw that the lowing of the cows had attracted the attention of some reapers in a field belonging to a man named Joshua, they turned and went back to their own country.

Great was the rejoicing when the Ark was once more in the land of Israel. The priests of Beth-shemesh placed the Ark upon the stone, and then with the wood of the cart they made a great fire, and upon it they offered up the cows which had drawn it, as a burnt offering to God.

Now the Ark was the most precious thing that the Israelites had. No one was allowed to touch it but the priests. But some of the men

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of Beth-shemesh were curious and looked into the Ark to see the tables of stone and anything else it contained. And God was offended because they did this, and caused more than fifty thousand of them to die.

Then the people of Beth-shemesh sent messengers to the People of Kirjath-jearim asking them to take the Ark to their city. This was done. The Ark was carried to the house of a man named Abinadab, who lived in the hills, and there it remained for twenty years.

As for Shiloh, the scene of Samuel's early life, it was utterly destroyed, though no one can say with certainty how it occurred, and for many years afterwards all traces of it were lost.

When Samuel grew up to be a man, he became Judge over all Israel. At that time the people were worshipping idols made of wood and stone, instead of the living and true God who had done so much for them, and in consequence were continually harassed by the nations about them, particularly by the Philistines.

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They complained to Samuel, but he told them that they could not expect God to prosper them when they were continually turning from Him and praying to false gods. Then he told them that the time had come when they must put away their idols and serve God only. He succeeded in touching the hearts of the people, and they all gathered together at a place called Mizpeh, where they fasted and confessed their sins.

When the Philistines heard of this great gathering at Mizpeh, they decided it was a good time to attack the Israelites once more. But God was on the side of the penitent Israelites, and sent a terrible thunderstorm, which so confused the Philistines that they turned and fled in dismay.

Then the Israelites pursued them and defeated them so badly that they were glad to reach their own country and leave Israel in peace. Not only this, they restored the cities they had taken and troubled the Israelites no more during Samuel's life.

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Samuel ruled the Israelites with patience and justice for many years. He visited their cities, heard their troubles, and then told them what to do. He established schools in some of the larger towns, where young men could study. These schools were not much like those we have now. They were for the study of ancient records from a religious point of view, the composition and chanting of sacred songs, and the cultivation of natural gifts as far as they were understood at that time.

The home of Samuel was at Ramah, the place where he was born. He built himself a house there, and also an altar unto the Lord. He had visions and revelations, which caused him to be revered by the people, and everywhere he was held in the highest esteem.

Samuel had two sons, Joel and Abiah, and when he grew old he made them judges over the people who lived in Beer-sheba. Remembering the trouble that had darkened Eli's life, we may be sure that Samuel had brought up his

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sons carefully, and had shown them how to deal justly with the people.

But in spite of all this, his sons did wrong. They were so dishonest and unfaithful that the elders of Israel went to Samuel's house at Ramah, and told him that his sons were unfit to rule Israel after his death, as they would naturally do. They begged that they might have a king to rule over them like the other nations.

At first Samuel was hurt and offended, but when they insisted that they would have a king and no other form of government, he prayed to God to show him what to do. And God told Samuel to grant their request, notwithstanding they had continually disobeyed Him and had set up false gods.

But first he was to tell the people how cruelly a king would treat them, and to warn them that in their trouble he would not help them. Samuel did as God told him, but his warnings were thrown away, for the people had set their hearts upon having a king. Then God said to Samuel,



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“Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.”

Now this is what Samuel did. There was a mighty man of the tribe of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, and he had a son named Saul, who was a very handsome man and taller than any man in Israel. One day Saul went with one of his father's servants to find a number of animals which had strayed away.

After a while, Saul found that they were a long way from home, and thought it best to give up the search, fearing his father would be worried at their absence. But they had now come to the place where Samuel lived, and, knowing him to be a prophet, they decided to ask him if he could tell them where the lost animals were. So they inquired for Samuel, and were told that he was just going to bless the sacrifice and afterwards eat with his guests.

Now the Lord had warned Samuel that the man who was to be king would come that day. So when they met, Samuel invited Saul to eat with him and be his guest until the next day,

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and he also told him not to be worried about the lost animals, for they had been found. Saul was modest and could not understand why he was so well treated, but Samuel made him take the seat of honor among the company he had invited to meet their future king, and after the feast he took him to his own house.

The next day, early in the morning, Samuel and Saul went out together, and Samuel told Saul to send his servant on ahead where he could not see them. Then he took a vial of oil which he had brought for the purpose, and poured it on his head, telling him that God had chosen him King of Israel. Then he told him what would happen to him on his way home.

First he would meet two men and learn from them that the lost animals had been found. Then he would meet three men who would salute him and give him food, and lastly, that he should meet a company of prophets, and that he should join them and prophesy with them. All these things happened, and when Saul reached home he told his people about them,

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but he did not say that he had been anointed king of Israel.

After that, Samuel again called the people together at Mizpeh, and Saul and his friends were there. Then Samuel told the people his message from the Lord, that they had rejected Him who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, by asking that a king should rule over them.

Then he caused each tribe to pass before him, until the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then Saul was called, but he was not to be found. He had hidden himself, being too modest to face the people as their king. But when they found him and looked upon his splendid figure as it towered above them, they were pleased and shouted, "God save the king." Thus simply was Saul elected King of Israel.

Samuel then drew up laws for the government of the kingdom, and wrote them in a book, which was carefully laid away; and after the people had done homage to their King, and had made him presents, each man went away to his own home. There was one body of men, how-

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ever, called the children of Belial, who were angry because Saul was not chosen from one of the larger and more important tribes, so they refused to have anything to do with him.

Saul went to his own home at Gibeah, and one day news came to him that a people called the Ammonites had gone up against Jabesh-gilead, and would only spare it on one condition. The people of the city must consent to have their right eyes put out. The elders of the city had asked and obtained seven days' grace in which to find help somewhere.

Saul was collecting his father's sheep and cattle when this was told to him. It made him very angry, and he determined to let his people know that he was their defender as well as their ruler. He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent portions to the different tribes of Israel with a message that if they did not follow him to battle with the Ammonites, their oxen would be cut to pieces in like manner.

The tribes responded so well to the call of

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their King that, when Saul counted his army, he found he had over three hundred thousand warriors. Then he sent word to the people of Jabesh-gilead that on the next day he and this great army would be there to help them.

When the battle was fought, it was a terrible one; but Saul smote the Ammonites from early morning until the middle of the day, and scattered them so that no two of them were left together. And the people began to trust in the King the Lord had chosen for them. Then they remembered how the children of Belial had refused to pay homage to Saul at Mizpeh, and called loudly on him to take vengeance on them. But Saul was merciful as well as brave, and said in reply: "There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel."

Then Samuel, whose authority over the people was still great, called them together at Gilgal, and the Bible says of this great assembly: "And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal;

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and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.”

Then Samuel spoke to the people, telling them he was now old and gray-headed, and appealing to them whether he had not walked before them honestly all his days, having neither defrauded them nor oppressed them. And the people said it was so—that he had not “taken aught of any man’s hand.”

Then Samuel repeated to them all the ways in which the Lord had led them since they came up out of the land of Egypt. He reminded them of the times they had rebelled against Him, and how He had forgiven them. He called upon them to fear the Lord and serve Him with truth, assuring them that if they should continue to do wickedly, He would destroy both them and their King.

Then, to prove the power of God, he prayed that the Lord would send a thunderstorm, and soon the rain began to fall, while thunder and lightning terrified the people. Then when the

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people besought Samuel to pray for them he did so, and also spoke very tenderly to them.

After Saul had reigned for two years, the Philistines again became troublesome. They were a people remarkable for unusual stature, warlike habits, and a great variety of weapons and armor, but with all this they were dull-witted. The word Palestine, one of the names of the Holy Land, is really another form of the word Philistia, which in those days was the name of the land occupied by those formidable enemies of the Israelites.

The Philistines gathered together a mighty army with which to fight Saul and his people. They had thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and so many fighting men that the Bible narrative says they were "as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude." The men of Israel were so frightened at this array that, instead of giving them battle, they hid themselves wherever they could.

Then Saul went to Samuel and asked his advice. Samuel told him to wait in a certain

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place for seven days. There he would join him, and they would offer a sacrifice to God, and ask Him to help the distressed nation. The seven days passed and Saul grew impatient. He did not wait for Samuel, but ordered a sacrifice prepared and offered it himself.

Then Samuel appeared and told Saul that, because of this disobedience, no one of his family should inherit the throne. God would choose, instead, a man after His own heart. Then Samuel went away, but it is not unlikely that he prayed to God that the Philistines might not conquer Israel, for just at this time Jonathan, the son of Saul, did a very brave thing, which resulted in the defeat of the Philistines.

With no one with him but his armor bearer, Jonathan, trusting in God to help him, went out and killed twenty of the enemy. This caused a panic in the camp of the Philistines, and Saul, hearing of it, followed it up and gained a great victory.

Some time after this, Samuel again visited Saul, and told him that God wished him to



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utterly destroy the Amalekites. They were a very wicked nation, and not one of them was to be left alive. All their cattle and sheep and camels were to be destroyed also.

So Saul fought the Amalekites and killed all of them except Agag, their king. He also saved the best of the sheep and cattle. Then he went and told Samuel that he had “performed the commandment of the Lord.” But Samuel asked, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” And Saul replied that he had spared them for a sacrifice to the Lord.

Samuel then told Saul that obedience was better than sacrifice. That he had not done as the Lord had commanded him, and that for this disobedience he would be cast aside and would be no longer King. Saul begged that he might not be humbled before the people, and his request was granted. But Samuel slew Agag, the King of the Amalekites, with his own hand, saying as he did so, “As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be child-

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less among women.” Then Samuel and Saul parted, never to see each other again. Yet Samuel loved Saul, and mourned that his disobedience was to cost him his life.

Then God told Samuel to go to Jesse, the grandson of Ruth and Boaz, and take anointing oil with him, for He had provided a king for Israel among Jesse’s sons. So Samuel went to Beth-lehem, where he made a solemn sacrifice to the Lord before the people.

And when Samuel saw Eliab, Jesse’s oldest son, he thought he was the one who would be chosen, for he was beautiful to look upon. But God told him Eliab was not the one He had chosen; He did not judge by the outward appearance, but by the heart. Then all the seven sons of Jesse were brought to Samuel, but he told their father that God had chosen none of them.

Then Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons, and Jesse replied that there was one more, the youngest, who was tending the sheep; and Samuel ordered him to be brought. When

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David, for that was his name, appeared, God told Samuel to anoint him, as he was to be the new King of Israel. So Samuel poured the oil upon David's head as he stood there among his brothers; and "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.

At the same time, the Spirit of the Lord left Saul, and an evil spirit began to trouble him. To drive away this spirit, his servants proposed that a skillful musician should be brought to soothe him. David was the one selected, and his music on the harp soothed the unhappy Saul.

Saul grew very fond of David and showed him a great deal of kindness, but after a time he tried to kill him, not once, but several times. Then David took refuge in Samuel's house in Ramah, and Saul tried to take him from there, but was unable to do so.

Saul fought another great battle with the Philistines, and was defeated. Three of his sons were killed and Saul himself was badly wounded. He did not wish to live, and so he

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asked his armor bearer to kill him, but as the man would not, he killed himself with his own sword.

But before Saul's death, and not long after he had tried to take David from Samuel's house, Samuel died, and the whole nation gathered together at Ramah and mourned for him, and there buried him with great honors.



## THE SHEPHERD BOY

### THE STORY OF DAVID

**W**HEN the fickle Israelites clamored for a king, in the days of the Prophet Samuel, Saul the Benjamite, towering in stature over all the nation, was the one selected by God in accordance with the qualities desired by his subjects. He was a man swayed by moods and impulses; at one time carried away by passion, at another, plunged in remorse and despair.

Twice in the fitful career of Saul, he disobeyed the direct commands of God, and because he did not restrain his impatience in the

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first instance, and preferred his own inclination and prospective glory in the second, he was compelled to hear from the lips of God's messenger, the decree that his kingdom would not be inherited by any of his family, but would be given to "a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou." It was with the after life of this man, chafing under the knowledge that in the sight of God he was but a nominal king, that the life of David the shepherd boy was to be strangely intermingled.

At Beth-lehem, the little town where Jesus the Christ was born more than one thousand years afterwards, lived a man named Jesse, who was the grandson of Ruth, the beautiful Moabitess. Jesse had eight sons, and God told Samuel that He would choose a successor to Saul from among them.

Samuel's position was a peculiar one. He had rebuked the presumption of the Israelites when they asked him for a king, but he had also carried out the commands of God and granted their request. The one chosen had

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proved ungrateful and disobedient, and now he must go and set apart another for the kingly office. In addition to this he loved Saul, and still further, he was afraid Saul would hear of it and kill him.

But God told him to go to Beth-lehem and offer a sacrifice, and invite Jesse to be present. So he did this, and after quieting the fears of the elders of that place, who feared at first that his errand was not a peaceful one, he told Jesse to have his sons pass in front of him, that he might see them.

Eliab, the first son, was a tall, handsome man, and Samuel thought he must be the one who was to rule over Israel. But God told him that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Then one by one the sons of Jesse were brought forward, but Samuel said, "The Lord hath not chosen these."

Then Samuel asked Jesse if he had any more sons; and Jesse replied that he had seen all except David the youngest, who was in the fields,

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tending the sheep. Samuel ordered David to be brought, and when he came, "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to," the Lord told Samuel to anoint him, for this was the one He had chosen.

Many years before, God had prepared Joseph, a shepherd boy, for a special work in connection with His chosen people, and now He had selected David, another shepherd boy, to rule over them.

The records of what happened to David immediately after that memorable day in his life say little about him, but we can imagine the boy going back to the fields and flocks, and taking care of the sheep as he had been doing. How much he was affected by the ceremony through which he had passed, we do not know, but we are told this: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

We next hear of David in the house of Saul, King of Israel, and this is the way it came about.

Saul was unhappy and full of gloomy



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thoughts. Knowing the power of music to soothe a distressed mind, the servants of Saul proposed that a skillful musician should be found; one who could quiet the unhappy king in his melancholy moods; and one of them added that David, the son of Jesse, could play sweetly upon the harp.

This plan of having a skilled musician in his family pleased Saul, and he sent messengers to Beth-lehem, commanding Jesse to send David to him. When the boy arrived, Saul was very much pleased with him, and soon came to love him greatly. He made him his "armor bearer," in order to have him near his person; and when he was in his gloomy moods, David would play upon his harp, and drive away Saul's despairing thoughts.

About this time, Saul prepared to resist an attack from the Philistines, one of the Israelites' most inveterate enemies. There was almost perpetual warfare between the two nations; first one would be victorious, and then the other.

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In one battle, which had taken place during the time that Eli the High Priest was Judge of Israel, the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant, a chest which Moses had made at the command of God, to hold the "tables of stone" upon which the Ten Commandments had been graven by the hand of God Himself.

The Ark was usually kept in the Tabernacle, or place of worship, but on this occasion it had been taken to the camp of the Israelitish army, in the hope that its presence would inspire the soldiers, and so help to defeat the enemy.

But the battle went against the Israelites, and the Ark of God fell into the hands of a nation who worshipped idols. The Philistines kept it for seven months, but as one misfortune after another followed them while it was in their possession, they were glad to send it back to the Israelites.

Now, upon the sides of two mountains, the army of Saul and the army of the Philistines were facing each other, with a valley between them in which was a dry watercourse or brook.

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There had been no fighting yet, but twice every day, at morning and evening, a champion of the Philistines had come out of their camp and defied the Israelites. His name was Goliath, and his home was in the city of Gath.

For forty days this giant Philistine had appeared and shouted a challenge for any one to come out and fight him, but from Saul down, every man was afraid to accept his defiance.

Three older brothers of David were in the Israelitish army, but for some reason which we do not know, David had left Saul's house sometime before, and was again tending his father's flocks in the fields of Beth-lehem. One day Jesse sent David to the camp on the mountain side to inquire after the welfare of his brothers and to take them food. And this brings to mind that Joseph's father once took him from his flocks and sent him on a similar errand.

David reached the army just as Goliath was shouting his accustomed challenge. He talked with his brothers and other soldiers, and they



DAVID PLAYING THE HARP BEFORE SAUL.



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told him how no man in the army dared to go out and face this terrible Philistine, although the King would richly reward any one who would overthrow him.

It is probable that David made up his mind then that he would fight and conquer this idolater who defied the "armies of the living God," and said he would do so, for soon he was summoned before Saul, and once more stood in the presence of the King he was to succeed. He must have changed considerably in appearance, for Saul did not recognize him.

Then David spoke out boldly and told the King that he was not afraid of the giant Philistine and would fight him. Saul reminded him that he was only a young man, while Goliath had been trained to war from his youth. Then David told him that twice in defense of his father's sheep he had killed the wild beasts that had attacked them, without weapons of any kind, and then he added:

"The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he

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will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine," and Saul replied, "Go, and the Lord be with thee."

Then Saul put his armor upon David, and gave him his sword; but David told him that he could use neither the helmet, the coat of mail, nor the sword, for he was not accustomed to them. Then, in his usual dress, with only a staff and a sling in his hands, he went to meet the mighty champion of the Philistines.

He stopped at the brook long enough to select five smooth stones, which he put in the bag, which, like all shepherds, he carried, and then went straight on to meet Goliath, who was coming toward him, shouting loud curses and threats. Then he called to Goliath that he was going to kill him and cut off his head, so that all the world might know "that there is a God in Israel."

Then David took one stone from the bag, placed it in his sling, and hurled it at his foe. One stone was enough. Straight as a rifle ball cleaves the air, the stone from David's sling

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struck Goliath in the forehead, and the boasting, blasphemous Philistine pitched forward on his face, and lay there, dead. Then David stood upon the body of Goliath, and, in the presence of both armies, cut off his head with his own sword.

As a great shout went up from the Israelites at David's exploit, the whole Philistine army, horrified at the death of their champion, turned and fled, and soon Saul's army was pursuing them with such dreadful slaughter that the dead and wounded lined the way for miles and miles.

David put the armor which he had stripped from Goliath in his tent, and then, with the Philistine's head in his hand, he was taken to Saul, who asked him, "Whose son art thou, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite." Saul must have been surprised to hear this, but for a long time afterwards David lived with him, and went no more to his father's house.



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From this time, Jonathan, the oldest son of Saul, and natural successor to the throne, began to love David as a brother, and David returned his affection as brothers rarely do. The Bible says, "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

As a proof of his great love, Jonathan gave David the robe which he was wearing, his girdle, his sword, and even his bow. He was noted as a most skillful archer, and his exploits with the bow were known far and wide. So, when he parted with his favorite weapon, it was a proof that his love for David was so strong that he wished to show it in every possible way.

Once more in the house of Saul, David received the highest marks of the King's regard. Saul made him one of his generals, and sent him repeatedly against the Philistines, who continued to be very active enemies of the Israelites. David was always victorious, and in consequence became highly popular, both with the army and the people.

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As time went on, Saul's pride in David's exploits and successes gave place to jealousy. It is not unlikely that he suspected that the man who performed such wonderful deeds was that "neighbor of thine, that is better than thou," of whom the Prophet Samuel had told him. His fits of madness, for they were scarcely less, began to return, and on one occasion he threw his javelin, or short spear, at David while he was trying to soothe him with the music of his harp as he had formerly done. But David escaped injury, and Saul pretended that he was sorry for what he had done.

Saul was afraid of David, and soon began to deprive him of his honors. He took away his rank of general, and made him "a captain of a thousand" only. But this made no difference in David's conduct towards him. He behaved wisely, performing his duties well, and making no complaints. Seeing this, Saul sent him on a dangerous expedition, hoping that he might be killed, but David returned victorious and soon afterwards married Saul's daughter, Michal.

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David was then at the height of his popularity as a young man, and Saul had reached the point where he made no secret of his intention to kill David. He even instructed Jonathan, and all of his servants, to kill David at the first opportunity. Instead of doing this, Jonathan told David of his father's intentions and persuaded him to hide himself for a while.

Then he went to Saul and talked to him about David. He reminded him that David had taken his life in his hand when he went out to meet Goliath the Philistine, and of his many other services to the nation. He told him how brave and good David was, and begged his father not to take his life. This appeal to Saul's better nature moved him very much, and he promised Jonathan that David should not be killed. He even went farther and restored David to his place about his person.

After this, war with the Philistines broke out once more, and David led an army against them and defeated them with great slaughter. Then Saul's anger and jealousy broke out again, and

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in one of his mad fits he attempted David's life, just as he had done before, when David was playing on his harp before him.

Then David, feeling that his life was no longer safe in Saul's service, fled by night to his own house. Saul sent soldiers there to kill him, but Michal, his wife, helped him to get away through a window. So David escaped from Saul, and went to Samuel, who was still living in his house at Ramah. Even there, Saul sent soldiers to take him from the prophet's house. He sent them on three separate occasions, and once he went himself, but God protected David, and Saul's plans came to naught.

After these four attempts upon his life, David stole away from Samuel's house and went secretly to see his friend Jonathan, and they had a long talk together. David was greatly grieved because Saul pursued him with such enmity, and Jonathan comforted him by saying that he would find out if his father persisted in his intention to kill him.

So David hid in the fields while Jonathan

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went away on his errand of kindness. Just at this time one of the national festivals or feasts was to occur, and Jonathan knew that David would be missed if he were not in his usual seat. The first day Saul did not mention David's name, although his seat near him was vacant, but on the second day he asked where David was. Jonathan made an excuse for him, and then Saul's anger blazed out against his son.

At first he cursed him because of his friendship for David. Then he sneered at him for allowing David to live, when, by killing him, his own succession to the throne would be made secure. He swore that he would have David's life, and when Jonathan asked, "Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?" he threw his javelin at him.

From this, Jonathan knew that his father had fully determined to kill David; so he got away as soon as he could and went to a great rock called Ezel, where he had arranged to meet his friend. He told David what his father had said and done, and after making a vow of perpetual

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friendship, they separated; David to hide himself from Saul's anger, and Jonathan to go back to his father's house.

Although loyal to David, Jonathan was also a dutiful son to Saul. He was brave as well as generous, and in the almost continual battles with the Philistines he greatly distinguished himself. Father and son fought side by side in this warfare until the day when both perished on Mount Gilboa.

David went first to the city of Nob, where the Tabernacle was at that time, and Ahimelech, the priest, gave him food and the sword of Goliath, which had been kept in the Tabernacle since the day David slew him.

Then David went to Gath, a Philistine city, where he was recognized. He pretended to be insane, and so got away with his life. Then he took refuge in the cave of Adullam, where many who were in distress or discontented, or in debt, joined him, and in this way he became the leader of about four hundred men. Fearing that Saul would take vengeance on his father and broth-

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ers, David arranged with the King of Moab to let them stay with him until, in his own words, "I know what God will do for me."

David was now an outlaw, but God protected him, and one occasion sent a prophet named Gad to warn him that he must leave the cave and go to that part of the country where the tribe of Judah lived. So David left the cave and made his home in the forest of Hareth.

One day Saul found out that Ahimelech had given David food and the sword of Goliath. So he had Ahimelech and all the priests of the Tabernacle brought before him, and accused Ahimelech of conspiring against his King. The good priest replied that he had done no wrong; he had simply helped David when he was in need because he was the King's most faithful servant and also his son-in-law.

Saul was so angry when he heard this that he told his guard to kill not only Ahimelech, but all the priests that were with him, but they were afraid to touch the holy men and would not draw their swords. Then Saul turned to a man

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named Doeg, an Edomite, and ordered him to kill the priests. Doeg was a very wicked man and glad to do this for Saul, so he killed every one of them—eighty-five in all.

Soon after this David heard that the Philistines had taken Keilah, one of the cities of Judah, and he asked God if he might go and punish them. God told him to go, and David and his little band of men retook the city and took a great deal of spoil from the Philistines.

Saul's pursuit of David was relentless, so when he found out that David was in Keilah, he arranged with the men of that city to deliver David to him. David heard of the intended treachery in time to escape with his band of followers, which had grown to about six hundred men. He once more made his home in the woods and mountains, where Jonathan visited him and comforted him.

Again Saul found out where David was hiding and hunted him from place to place, but just then his inveterate enemies, the Philistines, invaded his lands, and he was obliged to turn his



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attention to repulsing them. Meanwhile, David found a new home in the wilderness of En-gedi.

When he had driven away the Philistines, Saul, with an army of three thousand men, went into the wilderness in pursuit of David. At one time he went into a cave to sleep, not knowing that David and his men were hidden there. David's men wished him to kill Saul, and he could easily have done so, but instead he went softly behind him and cut off a piece of his robe or coat and took it away with him.

David watched until Saul left the cave, and then called to him, "My lord the king." Saul turned and saw David, who saluted him and then asked why the King thought he meant to do him harm, when he might have killed him in the cave but did not. In proof of this he showed Saul the piece which he had cut from his coat.

These words melted the heart of Saul and he cried out, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" Then he wept and told David that he had returned good for evil. He also said that he was

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now sure that David was to be king over Israel, and he asked David when that time came not to destroy his family. And David promised what he asked. It is not at all sure that David believed in Saul's change of heart, for he continued to avoid him.

One day David and his men were short of food, and being near the home of Nabal, a very rich and also a very mean man, he sent messengers to Nabal asking him to give them something to eat, and also reminding him that they had protected his shepherds and great flocks and herds from wandering bands of robbers. Nabal treated the messengers roughly, asking, "Who is David?" and sent them away without any food.

But Abigail, his wife, when she heard of it, prepared two hundred loaves of bread and a great deal of other food and took it to David just as he was preparing to take vengeance on her husband. So David and his men were well fed for once in their outlaw lives.

After this, the Ziphites, a people who were

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unfriendly to David, told Saul where he was to be found, and instead of keeping his word and letting David alone, he once more set out to capture him. But David's spies led him to Saul's camp, and one night he passed the sleeping sentinels, went boldly into Saul's tent, and took away his spear and the bottle of water that was beside his pillow.

Then from a hill close by he called loudly to Saul's soldiers, telling them what poor sentinels they were and showing the spear and water bottle he had taken from the King's tent. When Saul appeared David asked him why he continued to persecute him, and Saul replied, "I have sinned : return, my son David : for I will no more do thee harm."

But David did not believe that Saul was sincere, and went away again after telling him to send some one to get his spear. He had learned not to trust Saul's most solemn promises and that he was not safe in his kingdom. This time he took his six hundred men and went into the land of the Philistines, where he lived with

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Achish, King of Gath, for "a year and four months."

Once more the Philistines gathered together a great army and set out to do battle with Saul. David and his troops were with them, but the princes of the Philistines would not let them take any part in the fighting, fearing they would turn their arms against them. Achish, the King of Gath, spoke up manfully for David, but he could not convince the princes, and so David and his men had to go back.

On the third day after this, David came to Ziklag, the city which Achish had given him, and found that the Amalekites, another heathen nation, had burned it and taken away all the women and children as captives, David's family among them. David asked God if he should pursue them, and God told him to do so.

So David and his faithful six hundred men started in pursuit, but when they reached a brook called Besor, two hundred of them were so faint and tired that they could not cross it. Just then they found a slave who had been left

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behind by his cruel master because he was sick. He was nearly starved, but David's men gave him food, and in return for their kindness he told them which way the Amalekites had gone.

David overtook them at a time when they were eating and drinking and making merry over their raid. He smote them, "from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled." So David recovered all the captives, including his own family, and very much spoil.

Then driving before them their own and the captured flocks and herds, David and his men turned back. When they reached the brook Besor, a part of his band objected to sharing any of the spoils with the two hundred men who had been left there. But David ruled that those who "went down to the battle" and those "that tarried by the stuff" should share alike, and his decision became a law in the nation. He also gave some of the spoils to the men who lived in

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the various places where he had been in hiding.

While all this was going on Saul was fighting his last battle with the Philistines. It went against him. Jonathan and his two brothers were killed, and Saul was badly wounded. In his grief and pain he told his armor bearer to kill him lest he fall into the hands of his enemies, but this the man would not do, so Saul killed himself with his own sword.

When word was brought to David that Saul and Jonathan were dead, he was greatly distressed. He broke out into poetic lamentations which have been celebrated from that day to this. He forgot all of Saul's offenses against him in his grief at his death; and in memory of his love for Jonathan, he ordered that the children of the tribe of Judah should be instructed in the use of the bow.

The days of David the outlaw were now over. God told him to go to Hebron, the largest city of his tribe, and there he was installed king. In this way the old prophecy that the kingdom should be given to Judah was fulfilled, yet as

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long as any member of Saul's descendants lived, the succession was disputed, and there were wars between the rival houses. When Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, was slain, the last obstacle to his reign over all Israel was removed.

David reigned at Hebron for over seven years, and then, having captured Jerusalem, went to live there. The original name of the city was Jebus, and it contained the strongest citadel of the Jebusites. It was so strong that the Israelites had never been able to take it up to that time.

But David determined to conquer this stronghold, and did so. He offered the post of commander of all his forces to the man who would first scale the walls. His nephew, Joab, performed the feat, and so David gained the city.

Then David built him a palace and established his family and retinue in it, and next he punished the Philistines so thoroughly in battle that they were driven to the farthest borders of their kingdom.

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Having relieved the nation of this persistent enemy, David's next thought was for the Ark of the Covenant, which was still at Kirjath-jearim, where it had been placed after the Philistines had returned it to the Israelites. So he set out with thirty thousand men, had it put on a new cart drawn by oxen, and started for Jerusalem. On the way, which was rough, a man named Uzzah took hold of the Ark to steady it. God was displeased at this want of reverence, and Uzzah died.

Then David was afraid to take the Ark to Jerusalem, and left it in the house of a man named Obed-edom. It remained there three months, and then, hearing that Obed-edom had greatly prospered in that time, David had it taken to Jerusalem, where a Tabernacle had been prepared for its reception. But this time it was carried by priests and treated with the greatest reverence.

Now David could sit in his house at peace, thankful to God for all He had done for him, and in gratitude to God he planned to build a



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magnificent Temple in which the Ark should have a permanent home.

He took this matter to the prophet Nathan, who at first told him that God would be pleased to have him do this, but that night God spoke to Nathan and told him to tell David that he must not build Him a house, but that a son who should come after him should build it. He also told him that David's descendants should rule Israel forever.

David bowed to the will of God and devoted himself to ridding the Israelites of all their enemies. He did this very thoroughly and among the cities he conquered was Gath, the home of Goliath, whom he had slain with a stone, and one of his own places of refuge when hiding from the anger of Saul.

As time went on, David's favorite son, Absalom rebelled against him. He was a handsome man with a great quantity of beautiful hair. The armies of father and son met and Absalom was defeated. In his flight the mule he was riding ran under a great oak tree and Absalom

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was caught by the hair and hung there. He was found in this plight, and killed by Joab, the man whose exploit at Jerusalem made possible the capture of the city. David mourned deeply for his son Absalom.

Still later another of David's sons rebelled against him, and then David had Solomon, another son, anointed king while he himself still lived. When this was done he charged Solomon to serve God with a perfect heart, for if he did so God would always help him.

Then he gave Solomon the patterns for the Temple which he had not been allowed to build, and all the costly materials he had gathered for the work. He told him how the priests were to conduct the services when the Temple was completed, and then held a great service in which all the people joined.

David died when he was about seventy years old, and was buried in Jerusalem, which is often called the city of David, where he had reigned for thirty-three years, and Solomon, his son, sat upon his throne.

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David was far from being a perfect man, but he was a remarkable one. He was brave, as is easily seen, generous, as proved by his treatment of Saul, affectionate and lovable, as his friendship for Jonathan has shown. His gifts of poetry and music are seen in the Book of Psalms. He did wrong and was punished, but he repented for the sin and not for the punishment. He passed away full of riches and honors, and left to his son, Solomon, a well-established kingdom and a dignified position among the surrounding nations.



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### THE STORY OF ABSALOM

**H**EBRON was a well-known town in Palestine when Abraham and his nephew Lot returned from Egypt to settle in the land of Canaan. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is mentioned many times in Old Testament history. Its original name was Kirjath-arba, so called for Arba, the father of Anak, one of the giants who later terrorized

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the land where Sarah, the wife of Abraham, died. Hebron was in the possession of Ephron the Hittite, and it was from him that Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah for a family burial place.

Abraham dwelt at Hebron, as did Isaac and Jacob, and from there he journeyed with Isaac to Mount Moriah to offer the boy there as a sacrifice. From Hebron Jacob fled to escape Esau's anger after acquiring the birthright and blessing belonging to his brother, and there he offered a sacrifice to God on setting out to meet his long-lost son, Joseph.

Samuel, the prophet, made his sons judges at Hebron, and it was there that David was directed by God to go after the death of Saul, and there he was anointed King of Judah.

Saul, the first king of Israel, had a cousin named Abner, a very brave and distinguished general, who escaped alive from the battle in which Saul lost his life. While King David was reigning at Hebron, Abner took Ish-bosheth, Saul's youngest son, who was a weak and timid

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man, to Mahanaim and had him proclaimed King of Israel. It was natural for him to wish to see Saul's son upon his father's throne, and, being a very energetic man, he planned to unite the tribe of Judah, over which David reigned, to the remaining portion of the nation, over which the son of Saul had been made king. A long war ensued, but as it progressed David's side grew stronger and Ish-bosheth's side grew weaker.

David had three nephews, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, and all of them held important positions in his army. Joab was a very remarkable man in many ways, and was particularly a daring and successful warrior. He was the leader of David's forces and Abner was in command of the opposing army.

One day the two armies met at the pool of Gibeon, and Abner proposed a contest between champions from each side. Joab agreed to this and opposed twelve of his men to the same number of Benjamites from Abner's army. But each man killed his opponent at the same time

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and all fell together. This brought on a general battle and Abner was defeated. During the retreat, Asahel, who was the swiftest runner in David's army, pursued Abner very closely. Abner avoided a personal conflict with him, for the swift-footed youth was no match in strength or arms for the older man, and begged him to turn his attention to some other warrior. Asahel persisted, however, so Abner struck him with the butt end of his spear and unfortunately killed him.

After the fall of their brother, Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, but a troop of his soldiers collected around him on the top of a hill and protected him. Abner then called out to Joab, asking him to consider how badly a relentless pursuit might end for all of them, and Joab stopped the fighting after telling Abner that he would have kept it up until morning if he had not spoken as he did. Then Asahel was buried and the two armies separated. Joab and his men went back to Hebron, reaching there the next morning.

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After this Ish-bosheth and Abner had a disagreement and Abner declared that he would help David to become king over all Israel, from one end of the land to the other. So he sent messengers to David offering his assistance to make David the sole king. David accepted Abner's proposition on one condition, which Abner fulfilled, and in time Abner and twenty men went to David at Hebron. David gave them a great feast, as was the custom when persons of honor and distinction visited each other, and together they arranged the conditions under which David was to be the sole King of Israel. Then David dismissed Abner, who promised to return with all the elders of Israel.

Joab was absent at this time repelling a raid, and when he learned that Abner had been in Hebron and that David had received him well and even made a league with him, he was so angry that he heaped reproaches upon King David for allowing so dangerous a man as Abner to depart in peace. Then, without David's knowledge, he sent messengers after Abner, ask-



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ing him to return, and when Abner came back, Joab and his brother Abishai killed him in revenge for having slain their brother Asahel after the battle at Gibeon. It is not unlikely that jealousy of Abner prompted the deed as well.

King David was sincerely sorry for the death of Abner, and ordered a general mourning for the dead hero, while denouncing Joab for the deed he had deliberately planned. Soon after this two of Ish-bosheth's officers, who cherished a grievance against the house of Saul, surprised him while asleep and cut off his head, which they took to David, thinking they had done him a favor. But David was very angry with them for what they had done and had them executed. Then the elders of all the tribes gathered at Hebron and David was formally made King over all Israel.

After reigning in Hebron seven years and a half, David removed his capital to Jebus, or Jerusalem, which he had captured from the Jebusites by a special act of daring on the part

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of Joab, who was made commander of the army in reward for his exploit. Jerusalem was situated almost in the centre of David's kingdom and contained a very strong fortress. Its capture added greatly to the renown of the King, and he made it his permanent residence.

While reigning in Hebron, however, six sons were born to King David, and the name of the third one was Absalom. His mother's name was Maacah and she was of royal parentage, being the daughter of Talmai, King of Geshur, one of the three sons of Anak the giant.

Absalom grew up to be a youth of great beauty. He was remarkable for his luxuriant hair, the richness of his dress, and his pleasing manners. He was vain and foppish, and seems to have inherited none of his father's noble qualities. As time went on the ambition to become king himself grew upon Absalom and he used all means that came to his hand to make powerful friends and to get the confidence of the people.

Meanwhile King David was almost contin-

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ually employed in subjugating the heathen tribes around him. Chief among his enemies were the Philistines, but there were other nations with whom he was almost constantly at war. He organized and maintained a splendid army, the nucleus of which was the band of six hundred men which he attracted to himself during his outlaw days when he was hiding from the anger and madness of Saul. This band, which were called Gibborim, or heroes, were men whose sole occupation was war, and they constituted the first standing army of which there is any special account in the sacred writings.

These valiant warriors performed extraordinary feats. Jashobeam on one occasion slew three hundred foes in succession. Eleazar, son of Dodo, fought an army of Philistines single-handed until he could not separate his hand from his sword. Shammah won another great victory over the Philistines by his own unaided efforts.

Benaiah, the captain of David's body-guard,

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was a man of extraordinary daring and strength. Once, in the winter, a lion took refuge in a well near a village, but Benaiah descended into the well and slew him. At another time he encountered an Egyptian armed with an immense spear; Benaiah was unarmed save for an ordinary walking-staff, but he wrenched his big spear from the Egyptian and slew him with it.

Jonathan, the son of one of David's brothers, slew a monstrous giant who had defied the armies of Israel. This man had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. David took an active part himself in the wars he waged against the heathen, and once, when completely exhausted in a conflict with the Philistines, a giant by the name of Ishbi-benob attacked him, armed with a spear that weighed three hundred pounds and an immense battle-axe, but Abishai, his nephew, came to David's assistance and slew the giant.

It was while David was engaged in these wars that Absalom was plotting to obtain his father's

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throne. He did some very wicked things, and at one time had to flee from his father's just anger. He took refuge in Geshur, where his grandfather Talmai gave him shelter, and there he lived for three years. David had been very angry with Absalom, but he loved him in spite of his wrong-doing, and as time passed longed to see him. Joab, noticing that David did not speak of his wayward son as angrily as he had been doing, devised a plan to bring about a reconciliation between father and son. It was a daring thing to do, but any matter in which daring was involved had a peculiar charm for Joab.

In the little town of Tekoah, some six miles from Bethlehem, afterwards the birthplace of the prophet Amos and still later the birthplace of our Saviour, Joab found a woman who agreed to help him in his artifice. She appeared before King David in mourning robes and told him a story in which there was much resemblance to the relations between David and Absalom. She pleaded so well that the King

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promised that the erring son of whom she told him should not be punished. At last David perceived that she had told her story with a view to obtaining his promise to pardon Absalom, so he asked her directly if she had been told by Joab to address him as she had done. The woman confessed that she had been instructed by Joab, who had told her exactly what to say.

Then David sent for Joab and told him that Absalom might return to Jerusalem, but that he could not appear at his father's court. Absalom chafed under the situation and repeatedly urged Joab to admit him to his father's presence, but Joab, for all his daring, hesitated to take such a decided step. Then Absalom, who was revengeful by nature, ordered his servants, for he had an estate of his own, to set Joab's barley-field on fire.

Then Joab went to Absalom and asked him why he had burned his field of ripe barley. Absalom told him that he had done it because he would not devise any plan to admit him to his father's court, adding that he might as well be

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in exile at Geshur as to be in Jerusalem and not be allowed his rightful place and honors as a prince of Israel. So Joab went to David with the matter, and the King's love for his son was so great that he consented to see him. So Absalom was taken to the court, where he bowed before his father as if in submission to him, and then David gave him a kiss of reconciliation.

From that time Absalom's ambition increased. He went about in his chariot drawn by splendid horses in imitation of the heathen monarchs he had seen, attended by a body-guard of fifty men. He became, if possible, more politic and crafty than ever, and deliberately set about winning the hearts of the people so that when he was ready to announce himself king they would be on his side.

It was the custom then for people to prostrate themselves before members of the royal family, especially in the case of those who came from the different tribes to seek justice at the court. Absalom would contrive to meet such people at the city gates, and, to ingratiate himself with



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them, he would not allow them to give him the customary salute, but, instead, would shake hands with them and even kiss them.

Then he would enquire into the matter in dispute and tell every one that, while justice was on his side, he feared he would not be able to obtain it, and then he would intimate that if *he* were king, the matter would not be difficult at all. For four years Absalom pursued this policy, aided by certain ambitious men who saw a chance for their own preferment when Absalom was made king. The name of his principal counsellor was Ahithophel, but before the time to execute their cunningly planned plot arrived, he had, for some reason or other, withdrawn to his native city of Giloh, which was not far from Hebron, and there awaited news of the rebellion he knew was to take place, for he had been, next to Absalom, the chief spirit in it.

When the proper time arrived, Absalom left Jerusalem and went to Hebron, giving out that he was going to hold a festival in his birthplace. He told his father that he had made a vow to



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do this when in exile, if he had the good fortune to receive his father's permission to return to Jerusalem, and David gave him permission to go.

So Absalom, attended by two hundred men, left Jerusalem and went to Hebron. These men did not know what Absalom intended to do, but messengers had been sent by him to all the tribes, saying, "As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron." Absalom sent for Ahithophel and he appeared before the sacrifices were over. His presence was a great help to the conspiracy, for he was influential and a man of acute political foresight, and soon the rebellion of Absalom against his father, David, was set up in the ancient capital of Judah.

David does not seem to have attached much importance to the actions of his favorite son, and it was not until he was satisfied that Absalom had the good will and favor of all Israel that he began to look to his own safety. It is not impossible that he had calmly treated the

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event as one which would test the fidelity of his immediate friends and the ability of himself and his faithful Gibborim to contend with it.

David decided to leave Jerusalem, and did so, accompanied by his guards and servants and his royal household, with the evident intention of gaining time and of preventing a possible massacre in the city in case it was stormed and taken by the rebels. He passed out of the eastern gate of the city, crossed the brook Kidron, and ascended the Mount of Olives, two places intimately connected with the life of Our Saviour nearly one thousand years afterwards. From the mount he could look back over the city which he had won from a heathen people, and where he had lived in glory and power and happiness.

In spite of David's courage and fortitude, the spectacle was that of an old man driven forth by an ungrateful son, to whose fortunes the fickle people, whose independence as a nation he had established, had allied themselves. His sorrow could not be disguised as, with covered

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head and bared feet, he wept and lamented his evil fortune; yet it is easy to see that neither his piety, his prudence, nor his generosity left him.

The priests Zadok and Abiathar followed David with the sacred Ark, but he sent them back with it to Jerusalem. He advised Ittai, a foreigner who was in his service, not to adhere to his falling fortunes, but Ittai said he would stay with him, "whether in death or life." He sent his friend Hushai, a man of great sagacity and address, back to Jerusalem to foil the intrigue of the crafty Ahithophel, and to send him word of important events, and then set forth on his journey.

Soon he met Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, the son of his old friend Jonathan, who brought him welcome presents of food and animals upon which members of the royal family could ride; and then, farther on his way, he was met by a man named Shimei, who belonged to the family of Saul, who cursed David and threw stones and dirt at him. At this insult Abishai

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proposed to kill the man, but David forbade it.

Meanwhile Absalom had entered Jerusalem without resistance, and among the first to offer his congratulations was David's faithful friend Hushai. Ahithophel advised Absalom to take an army of chosen men and pursue David at once, while he was weary and dispirited, but Hushai, with great skill, was able to convince Absalom that the plan was not a good one. He reminded Absalom that David's desperate bravery was like the she-bear in the wood robbed of her cubs, and suggested, instead, that Absalom would better get together a great army which David could not resist.

Hushai's counsel prevailed, and he was in this way able to gain time in which to warn David of the danger he was in. Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, how Ahithophel had counselled Absalom, and by the aid of two young priests, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, a message was sent to David telling him to cross the Jordan with all possible speed. These young priests were nearly captured on the way, however, but

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they escaped from Absalom's soldiers by hiding in a well in the courtyard of a friend. The mistress of the house put the cover on the well, spread ground corn on it, and then sent those who were looking for Jonathan and Ahimaaz in a wrong direction.

David received Hushai's warning in time to cross the Jordan and reach a place of safety, while Ahithophel, who had seen his influence with Absalom shaken by Hushai, and probably foreseeing the failure of the conspiracy, went to his own home and hung himself. David took refuge in the city of Mahanaim, where he was joined by distinguished persons from the surrounding tribes, who owed him allegiance. Chief among them was a venerable old man named Barzillai, who, with the others, brought beds, household utensils, and many kinds of food for the use of David and his household.

Apparently without solicitation, a considerable army gathered around David from the surrounding districts, and he was able to fortify Mahanaim, which had been a royal city some

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twenty years before. Absalom also raised an army larger than that of David, and at last a decisive battle was fought, not at Mahanaim, but at some distance from it and on the same side of the Jordan.

Absalom's army was commanded by Amasa, the son of David's sister Abigail, while that of David was in three divisions under the leadership of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, who had refused to desert David's fortunes, although a foreigner. David was anxious to accompany his army as commander-in-chief, but the people would not allow him to expose himself in this way. He therefore stood in the gate of Mahanaim as the troops marched out, and in the hearing of them all charged Joab, Abishai, and Ittai to deal gently with his son Absalom and to spare his life.

The battle was fought in the wood of Ephraim, and Absalom's army was defeated. Twenty thousand men lost their lives on the battle-field and in the thickets and swamps in the retreat that followed. Absalom turned the

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mule he was riding into a wood and rode away at full speed. The boughs of the trees through which he was forcing his way hung low, and Absalom's long and abundant hair caught on the branch of an oak. He was dragged from his mule and left hanging in this strange way, unable to extricate himself.

As he hung there he was seen by a soldier, who ran with the news to Joab, who asked why he had not killed him. The man reminded Joab that the King's express commands had been that Absalom should not be harmed. But Joab knew that the death of Absalom would virtually put an end to the rebellion, so he hastened to the place where Absalom hung, still alive, from the branch of the oak, and thrust three darts through his heart. His body-guard then dispatched the unhappy prince, threw his body into a ditch or pit, and covered it with a heap of stones.

Meanwhile David was anxiously waiting for news of the battle, as Eli had waited many years before at Shiloh. Of those who brought him

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word that his army had been victorious, he had but one eager question to ask, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" and when he learned the truth, the king was lost in the bereaved father, and, going up alone to a chamber over the gate of the city, he broke out into the bitter lamentation. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Absalom's death restored peace to David's kingdom, and later he died full of years and honors. We are told that during his lifetime Absalom reared for himself a mausoleum in a spot known as the King's Dale. This was for many years afterward celebrated as the tomb of Absalom, the Boy who would be King.





## THE CAPTIVE BOY

THE STORY OF DANIEL

**D**AVID, the second of the Israelitish kings, captured the city of Jebus, or Jerusalem, which he enlarged and beautified and made the political and religious capital of the nation. But it was during the reign of Solomon, his son, who succeeded to his throne, that the magnificence of the city reached its height.

The greatest work in which Solomon engaged was the building of the Temple on Mount Moriah. The plan of the Temple was in the main the same as that of the Tabernacle which the children of Israel reared at the command

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of God during their wanderings after they left Egypt, but on a larger scale.

There was a holy place for the altar of incense, the table of shewbread, and the golden candlestick, and in the Holy of Holies was placed the Ark containing the Tables of Stone.

The whole building was adorned with gold and precious stones and the woodwork was covered with gold. There was also a great altar and many utensils of brass, all of the finest workmanship. While offering his beautiful prayer at the dedication of the Temple Solomon kneeled before all the assembled people and this is the first recorded instance of a kneeling attitude in prayer, for the usual custom had been to stand.

Solomon had many ships which brought him gold and silver and many beautiful things from other countries. His own house or palace was one of the most beautiful ever built. His throne was of ivory overlaid with pure gold, the footstool was of gold, and on the steps leading to the throne were twelve carved lions on each side.

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Solomon's fame spread far and wide, for he was wiser than any man who had ever lived before. His fame reached an Eastern princess known as the Queen of Sheba, and she visited him in great state. When she saw his wealth and magnificence and listened to his wisdom, she declared that the half had not been told her.

At Solomon's death his son Rehoboam succeeded him, and the people asked the new King to lighten their heavy taxes and other burdens. Their leader was a man named Jeroboam, who promised that he and the people would serve Rehoboam faithfully if he would grant their request. Their petition was scornfully rejected by the King and then ten of the twelve tribes revolted and chose Jeroboam as their king.

Jeroboam set up his kingdom at Ephraim and was called King of Israel, while Rehoboam reigned at Jerusalem, his people being known as the kingdom of Judah. From this time until their extinction these two divisions of the

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Israelitish nation maintained a separate existence.

In all, nineteen kings and one queen reigned over the kingdom of Judah, but its end came after a period of nearly four hundred years. Jehoiachin was its king when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem and captured it. The Temple and the King's palace were spoiled, and Jehoiachin and his family, the princes of Judah, and all the soldiers and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem who had escaped the slaughter of the siege were carried away as captives.

Among the young princes of Judah who were carried away at this time was a boy named Daniel. With a number of others he was selected to be trained for service in the King's household. All of these boys were handsome children, quick to learn and capable of being taught the science and wisdom of the Babylonish kingdom.

Daniel had three intimate friends among this company of young Jews, as the inhabitants of

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Jerusalem were called. Their names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, but other names were given all of them in their new home. Daniel was called Belteshazzar and the others Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

These young princes were not only to be instructed in the wisdom of the Babylonians, but they were to eat the same kind of food that was served to the King and drink such wine as he drank. But this food and wine had been offered to the idols of that country, and these boys, having been brought up under the strict religious and ceremonial laws of their own country, refused to partake of either.

But Daniel had gained the good will of Melzar, the officer who had charge of himself and his three companions, and at Daniel's request Melzar gave them only plain vegetable food and water to drink. At the end of ten days they were handsomer and in better condition than those who had eaten the King's food. When all the boys were at last brought before Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel and his three friends were



KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR CALLED "COME FORTH!"



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found to be wiser than all the learned men in the whole kingdom of Babylon.

Some time after this Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, but when he awoke he could not remember it. So he called the wise men of Babylon to him and told them they must recall the dream to him and tell him what it meant. Of course they could not relate the dream and they told him there was not a man upon the earth who could do such a thing.

Nebuchadnezzar was just as unreasonable as a man could be and accustomed to having his own way in all things, so he told the wise men that because they could not recall his dream and also tell him what it meant, he would have them all slain. And he ordered this done at once.

Daniel heard of this and asked Arioch, the captain of the King's guard, why the King was so angry. Arioch told him why it was and then Daniel went to Nebuchadnezzar and told him that if he would give him time he would



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not only relate the dream but interpret it for him.

Then Daniel and his three friends prayed to God that he would reveal the dream and the interpretation, and one night God told the dream to Daniel and also told him what it meant.

After thanking God for answering his prayer, Daniel went to Arioch and said, "Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation."

When Daniel stood before Nebuchadnezzar he boldly told him that he could tell him his dream and the meaning of it, not because he was wiser than any one else, but because God had told both to him.

Then Daniel told the King that, in his dream, he had seen an image with a head of fine gold, a breast and arms of silver, the middle of the body and the thighs of brass, and the feet of part iron and part clay. A stone cut out of the mountain without hands came and struck the feet of the image, dashing them to pieces and

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causing it to fall, and it was broken into dust, which the wind carried away.

Then he told the King that the head of gold meant his kingdom, which was the greatest in the world at that time; while the silver, brass, iron, and clay meant other and lesser kingdoms which should arise after he was dead. The stone meant the everlasting kingdom which God would set up and which would never be destroyed.

Nebuchadnezzar was so impressed with what Daniel had told him that he fell on his face and worshipped him. Then he said, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret."

Then Nebuchadnezzar lavished presents upon Daniel, "and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon." Daniel did not forget his three friends, but used his influence to have them appointed to important positions.

Twenty-three years passed on and during that time Nebuchadnezzar forgot all about the

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God of Daniel and once more thought only of himself. He was a great king and a great conqueror, very proud of what he had done, and very self-willed. The city of Babylon was the real pride of his life, however, for he had made it the grandest and most beautiful city in the world.

It was a beautiful city. It was built on both sides of the river Euphrates and the length of the walls that surrounded it was sixty miles. In these walls were a hundred gates of solid brass. The city was divided into six hundred and seventy-six squares by straight and wide streets, and in many of these squares were parks and pleasure-grounds. There was a great bridge over the river and a tunnel underneath it.

Nebuchadnezzar's palace alone covered six miles of ground and was magnificent in every detail, being largely furnished with almost priceless objects brought from other countries. The hanging gardens which he built were the wonder of the world, being in the form of terraces

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rising one above the other, and so constructed that they supported the weight of great trees which grew there as well as they had done in the far-away countries from which the King had them brought.

Being successful in everything he did, and having everything he wanted, Nebuchadnezzar worshipped himself and decided that he would make his people worship him, too. So he had a great statue made of gold and set up on a high pedestal in the plain of Dura. Then he appointed a certain day for all the people to assemble on the plain and at a given signal worship his statue.

The penalty for not complying with this decree was that, whoever refused was to be cast into a great furnace in which was a terribly hot fire. All the people obeyed the edict and worshipped the statue with the exception of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Daniel was absent on business for the King at this time.

When Nebuchadnezzar was told that the

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three Jews had refused to worship his statue he had them brought before him, and in a great rage asked them if it was true. They told him it was true, and then the King sneeringly asked them, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" They replied that the God whom they worshipped would see that they were not harmed if they were thrown into the furnace.

Then Nebuchadnezzar in his fury commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than it ever had been heated and that the strongest of his soldiers should bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego and cast them into the furnace. When this was done the flames were so fierce that the soldiers were burned to death, but the men whom they threw into the furnace were not harmed at all.

As Nebuchadnezzar looked upon the scene he suddenly asked those who stood near him, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" and they answered, "True, O king." Then Nebuchadnezzar said: "I see

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four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

Then the King went near the furnace and called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to come forth, and they stepped out of the fire and stood before him, unharmed.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him.” And then he made a decree that any one who should speak evil of the God of these men should be killed and then cut in pieces. Then he promoted these friends of Daniel to still higher positions.

Ten years after this Nebuchadnezzar had another dream that troubled him, and after the wise men failed to interpret it Daniel was called in to tell the King its meaning.

In his dream the King saw a great tall tree bearing many fair leaves and much fruit, and a Holy One came down from heaven and ordered it to be cut down and its leaves scattered. But

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the stump of the tree was to be left in the earth to be watered by the dews of heaven.

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that the tree was the King himself. Men were to drive him into the fields, where he would eat grass like an ox and would be wet with the dew of heaven until he learned that God ruled over all. And in time God sent a kind of insanity upon Nebuchadnezzar in which he imagined he was an ox. He was driven into the fields and ate grass on his hands and knees and his body was wet with the dew.

The madness of the King lasted for seven years, and during this time Daniel acted as vice-roy and ruled the kingdom. When the King's reason was restored he again ascended the throne, but his magnificence and power declined, and at last he died, leaving his kingdom to Belshazzar, his son. Belshazzar preferred younger counsellors, and Daniel lived in retirement until the last night of his reign.

One night Belshazzar in fancied security gave a great feast to a thousand of his lords.

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When the revelry was at its height he sent for the golden vessels which his father had taken from the Temple at Jerusalem, that he and his guests might drink wine from them while praising their gods or idols.

As they feasted, a man's hand appeared on the wall and wrote an inscription, which made Belshazzar so afraid that he called his wise men to tell him what it meant. But the wise men could not read the writing, and the King grew still more afraid. Then the Queen came in and told Belshazzar not to be afraid, for if Daniel could be found he would not only read the writing but tell him what it meant.

Daniel was found and brought in. The King told him that he had heard of him and his wisdom, and if he would tell him what the writing meant he would richly reward him. Daniel told Belshazzar to keep his gifts and that he would tell him the meaning of the writing; but first he reminded him how God had humbled the pride of his father, and that now He was to humble him. The words meant that God had taken the



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kingdom from him and given it to the Medes and the Persians. Then Belshazzar had Daniel clothed in gorgeous raiment with a gold chain around his neck, and made him the third ruler in the kingdom.

That very night the armies of Cyrus, King of Persia, who was besieging Babylon, obtained an entrance into the city of Babylon and captured it. Belshazzar was slain and "Darius the Mede" was appointed by Cyrus to rule the conquered city.

Darius gave Daniel the highest position in the government of the kingdom. The other officers hated Daniel but could find no fault in him. At last they decided that the only way to bring him under Darius' displeasure was through his worship of God. So they asked Darius to make a decree that any man who asked a petition of any god or man except the King for thirty days should be thrown into a den of lions, and Darius did as they asked him.

Daniel was then an old man, but his trust in God had never wavered. So when he learned

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that the decree which forbade him to pray to God had been signed, “he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”

When the officers who hated Daniel told Darius that he was praying to his God three times a day, Darius was displeased with himself and tried all that day to save Daniel. But the decree could not be altered on account of the strict law regarding such edicts, and Daniel was put into the den of lions.

Darius seems to have had some confidence that Daniel's God would keep him from harm, but he passed the night fasting and without the usual entertainments of his palace. Very early in the morning he went to the den of lions and in a distressed voice called out, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?” and Daniel replied that God

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had shut the lions' mouths and that he was unharmed.

Then Darius was delighted and had Daniel taken out of the den and his accusers and their families thrown to the lions, who tore them to pieces. Then he sent out an edict that the God of Daniel should be revered throughout all his dominions.

Seventy years had passed since Nebuchadnezzar carried the Jews away from Jerusalem. Cyrus now permitted them to return to their own country, and gave back the vessels of the Temple to Zerubbabel, a prince of Judah. A company of more than forty thousand men then set out for Jerusalem, but they found the city in ruins.

The first thing the Jews did was to build an altar and offer the appointed services upon it. Then they began to rebuild the Temple, but for some years the work progressed slowly. It was eventually rebuilt and dedicated to the worship of God, but it was seventy years afterward that permission to rebuild the city was

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granted by Artaxerxes, the sovereign of Persia at that time.

The Book of Daniel is one of the most remarkable in the Bible. In it, in addition to the history he relates, his prophecies are recorded, and among them are the ones which foretold that the Jews would be allowed to return to their own land and build up Jerusalem, and that in about four hundred and eighty-three years afterwards, the Messiah, the Saviour of the World, would be born.

When reading the story of Daniel, the captive boy prince of Judah, it is easy to recall the story of Joseph, the slave boy, who was enabled by God to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and to note that both Joseph and Daniel were rewarded in the same manner by becoming rulers of Egypt and of Babylon respectively.

And we can always remember Daniel as a very busy man who never let the pressure of his business interfere with his religious duties.



## THE BOY JESUS

**T**HE most beautiful story in the world, and the most wonderful as well, is the story of Jesus, the little Jew boy who was born on the twenty-fifth day of December almost two thousand years ago. *Nothing that has ever been written or anything that has ever been told can compare with it in interest or wonder.*

When Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden for doing wrong, God promised that a Redeemer should be sent to save the

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world from the consequences of their sin, and this promise He repeated to Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and David.

In time the descendants of these men grew to be a great nation. As long as they obeyed God they prospered and increased, but they grew proud and self-willed and made new laws and adopted new customs to please themselves.

Then other nations went to war with them and conquered them, destroying their cities and making them captives.

Then came a time when the bitterest persecutions were heaped upon the Jews and every possible insult offered to their religion. This was followed by an interval of independence, but at the time Jesus was born Augustus Cæsar, the Roman Emperor, was the world's master and the Jews were his subjects.

Under the title of King of Judea, Herod, an Edomite, but of the Jewish faith, ruled the Jews at Jerusalem as a deputy of Cæsar. At this time he was an old man and a very wicked one.

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Herod had rebuilt the Temple on a magnificent scale and the outward ceremonial of worship was kept up, but the time was one of great wickedness and the Jews were deeply tainted with the prevailing corruption. They chiefly desired to triumph over their enemies, and were eagerly looking forward to the coming of the promised Messiah, but they expected He would come as a king and again make of them a great nation.

In the fields near the little town of Bethlehem, some shepherds were watching their flocks one winter's night. Suddenly a wonderful and beautiful light appeared in the sky, and as they looked at it they saw an angel coming down towards them. Seeing that they trembled with fear at the dazzling light that surrounded him, the angel said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And then he told them they would





THE CHRIST CHILD AT NAZARETH.





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find the baby lying in a manger, or trough, from which cattle are fed.

Leaving their flocks where they were, the shepherds went to Bethlehem, which was sometimes called the city of David, and in the stable of an inn they found a beautiful baby boy with his father and mother watching over him. Then they went away and told every one they met the wonderful things they had seen and heard.

The Roman Emperor had made a decree that all the people whom he ruled should go to certain places and have their names recorded. It was something like what we call taking a census, and as Joseph and Mary, the parents of the baby whom the shepherds saw, belonged to the tribe of Judah, Bethlehem was the town where they were ordered to go.

Joseph and Mary set out on their journey, but when they arrived at Bethlehem there was no place where they could stay at night. The inns were all full and they were obliged to spend the night in a stable where animals were

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kept. They were thankful to get this place and in it Jesus was born. This was the first Christmas day and ever since then we keep it as the birthday of our Saviour, Jesus the Christ.

Eight days after He was born His name of Jesus was given to Him with all the ceremonies of the Jewish law. There was also a law which required every mother to take her first baby boy to the Temple as a child that belonged to God. His parents could redeem or buy him back again, however, and Joseph and Mary did so. As they were poor people, although of royal descent, they were only required to pay a sum equal to about three dollars of our money.

There were many other people in the Temple at this time and among them were an old man named Simeon and an aged woman named Anna, and they knew at once that the Baby Jesus, whom His mother had brought there with the usual offering of two white turtle doves, was the promised Saviour of the world; and they blessed Him. Then Joseph and Mary went back to Bethlehem, where they were able to find

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a place to live, as the crowds of people had gone to their homes.

After a while it began to be known that the long-promised Saviour, who was to be the king of his people, had come. Herod heard of it and was much disturbed, for he did not wish to lose his throne. At this time three wise men came to Jerusalem from a distant country. They had seen a new star in the sky, and thought it might be the star of the new king of whom they had read in the old writings they had studied.

So, with many valuable and precious gifts, they went to Jerusalem and made many inquiries about "the new King of the Jews." Herod had these wise men brought before him and tried to find out all they knew about a new king, but they could tell him nothing except that they had seen His star in the east and had come to worship Him. So Herod told them to go to Bethlehem, where the chief priests and scribes had said Jesus was to be born, and bring back to him all the information they could get.

The wise men set out to find the new king, and

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in time came to Bethlehem, led by the star, which at last stood right over the place where Jesus was. When they saw Him they bowed down and worshipped Him, and then presented their beautiful and costly gifts.

Herod had told the wise men that he wanted to find the child so he could worship him, but he did not mean a word he said. He was cruel and crafty and only wanted to get the baby into his hands. God warned the wise men of this, and instead of going back to Herod and telling him where Jesus was they went to their homes by another way.

But Herod knew now that Jesus was in Bethlehem, and so he did the most cruel thing he could think of. He sent his soldiers to Bethlehem with orders to kill every boy baby in the town. But before the soldiers could get there, God told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and go into the land of Egypt, and so they escaped Herod's vengeance.

The journey to Egypt was made in safety, and Joseph and Mary and Jesus lived there

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until they heard that Herod was dead. Then they returned to a town called Nazareth, where Joseph and Mary had lived before Jesus was born and where Joseph had followed the trade of a carpenter.

Here in the little town on the shore of the Sea of Galilee Jesus grew from babyhood to boyhood just as other children do. It is not unlikely that His father taught Him to handle the carpenter's tools, for all Jewish boys at that time were taught a trade of some kind; neither is it unlikely that His mother taught Him to help her about the house, or that she told Him the strange things that had occurred at His birth.

In one respect Jesus was not like other children, for, young as He was, He knew that God had sent Him into the world to live the same life that His people lived, to suffer the same temptations, trials, and sorrows, and to be an example by His goodness for all men and women to follow.

It was this that made Him seek the company

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of children of His own age. He tried to teach them to be obedient and helpful to their parents, to be useful and to be kind to others. He tried to teach them to love all things in nature, and to love and be gentle to all the creatures God had created. In this way He spent the early years of His life.

All the males of the Jewish nation were commanded to attend each year at least one of the feasts or festivals held at Jerusalem; so when Jesus was twelve years old He was taken there to keep the feast of the Passover, that was held every year in remembrance of the time when God spared His people the punishment He inflicted upon the Egyptians, on the night Moses led them from Egypt.

This feast was held in the spring of the year not far from the time when we keep Easter, and lasted about seven days. The people came to Jerusalem in immense crowds, and when the ceremonies were over left in large companies in which a child might easily be lost.

Joseph and Mary had gone a whole day's

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journey towards their home without being troubled by the absence of Jesus, but as night came on they began to look for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. No one had seen Jesus, however, and so the frightened parents turned back to Jerusalem to look for Him.

They searched for three days and then they found Him in the Temple sitting in the midst of the Rabbis or teachers, listening to them and answering their questions, and these wise men were astonished at His great understanding. They asked Him many questions that they could not answer themselves, but Jesus was, by the aid of the great wisdom God had given Him, able to reply to them.

Then Mary said to Jesus, "Why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." And Jesus replied that they need not have feared, for He was doing God's work. Joseph and Mary were also amazed, for although they never forgot that Jesus was the promised King, they could scarcely realize that the Baby they had nursed and the



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Child they had taught and the Boy who had worked in the carpenter's shop in the village of Nazareth was before them arguing with the learned Rabbis, who were held in such veneration.

Jesus then went back to Nazareth with His parents and lived there until He was about thirty years old. The Bible tells us very little about those eighteen years of His life, but some of the older Christian writers tell us that He did rough work, and the people of Nazareth called Him not only the Son of the carpenter, but *the* Carpenter, so we may suppose that His father was dead and that His mother was a widow.

It is not hard to picture the home of Mary and Jesus. It was probably very like the homes seen to-day in Nazareth. These are low white dwellings with flat roofs.

About this time a man named John, who was a cousin of Jesus', appeared and preached to the people on the banks of the river Jordan. His clothing was of the simplest, and his food

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such as he could find outside of the villages and towns. He told the people who flocked to hear him that they must change their way of living, repent of their disobedience of God's commands, and as a sign that they had done so be baptized.

The people were surprised at his preaching, but more so when he told them that no violent outward change was demanded of them. They were to perform their every-day duties, whatever they might be, and be gentle and just to all. He told them that the promised Saviour was close at hand, and they were to receive Him with humility and serve Him faithfully.

In His humble home at Nazareth Jesus knew all that John the Baptist, as he is called, was doing; and knew that the time had come when He was to tell the people that He was their Saviour and would take their sins upon Himself. His first step was to go to John and be baptized, not because He had any sins of His own to be washed away, but to set an example to others. After this was done an appearance like a dove

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descended upon Him and a voice was heard saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

After Jesus had been baptized He wished, before He began to do the work He was sent to do, to be alone. So He went into a wild place where no one lived and staid there for forty days and nights, neither eating nor drinking nor sleeping during that time, but praying to God to help Him in His work. There He was tempted by an evil spirit, who promised Him everything He could wish for if He would only worship him. But Jesus drove all wicked thoughts from His mind and the tempter left Him.

Then Jesus went to His home in Nazareth, and on the first Sabbath after that read from the Book of Isaiah in the Synagogue, as the church was called. When He had done this He explained what He had read so clearly that those who heard Him were amazed at His wisdom, but at the same time they were so angry at Him for telling them of their sins that they forced Him to leave the church and would have cast Him

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headlong from the top of the hill on which the village was built if He had not escaped from them.

From Nazareth Jesus went to another town named Cana, and there He preached to the people on the Sabbath days; and it was there that He performed His first miracle. It was at a wedding feast and Mary, the mother of Jesus, was one of the guests. Towards the end of the feast there was no wine left, and Jesus told the servant to fill the waterpots which stood by the door—six in number—with water. This was done, and when the water was poured out it had become wine.

Jesus had two followers or disciples who were with Him at the wedding feast, and after that He chose three more. The names of the five were Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael; and with Mary they followed Him to Capernaum, another town in Galilee. After that the number of His disciples was increased to twelve. They went wherever He went during all the time He was preaching and teaching,

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and these twelve followers are called the Twelve Apostles.

The divine power of Jesus was beginning to make itself felt, for people suffering from all kinds of diseases were brought to Him to be healed. The fame of His wonderful knowledge and of His tender kindness to all who were in pain or trouble, spread quickly over the country, and immense crowds followed Him, so that He had no rest nor quiet.

About this time He preached the most wonderful sermon that was ever heard—"The Sermon on the Mount"—in which He gave us the "Lord's Prayer" and told us how to pray so that God would listen to us.

Then, with His disciples, Jesus went to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. There He found that instead of using the Temple as a place of worship alone, men were selling sheep and oxen and doves and changing money there, so He made a whip of small cords and drove out the animals and overturned the tables of the money-

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changers, saying, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

So Jesus' life went on. He healed the sick and afflicted who came to Him. He taught the crowds who flocked to hear His words by means of parables or stories which they could understand, and He also foretold the manner of His death and resurrection.

All this made the priests and head men of Jerusalem very angry, and they tried to find some means of destroying Jesus, for they were afraid the people would believe in His teachings and forsake them. All that Jesus taught was love and faith, that God was Love and would protect and care for them—men and women and children—if they would only love and serve Him; while the priests made money and profit from their religion, and cared little if anything for the welfare of the people.

One day after Jesus had been teaching the people, He became very tired, and so His disciples took Him in a boat out onto the lake and watched over Him while He slept. But sud-

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denly such a great storm came up that they were afraid the boat would sink. So they woke Jesus, who commanded the waves to be still, and immediately the storm ceased. Then Jesus rebuked the disciples for their want of faith in Him.

At another time Jesus went to a city called Nain, and there He met people carrying a dead man to his grave. A poor widow was following, weeping bitterly, for the dead man was her only child. But Jesus, after telling her not to weep, said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And the man who had been dead sat up and began to talk.

At still another time a man named Jairus, who had a little daughter who was dying, came to Jesus and asked Him to touch her, that she might live. Jesus went with this man and found the little one was dead. But He took her by the hand and told her to arise, and the little girl got up alive and well.

Jesus performed many such miracles, and also healed those who had faith in Him, for He

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wished the people to see how faith helped them to be healed and to be good. He cured men and women of every sort of disease. He made the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the blind to see. He made the deformed straight again, and even those who had been cripples from their birth were able to walk as well as any one.

Once as many as five thousand people followed Jesus to the top of a hill, and there He taught them all day. At sunset His disciples wished to send them away, as they were tired and hungry and there were only five loaves and two small fishes among them. Then Jesus told the disciples to make this great crowd sit down, and He took the loaves and fishes and blessed them and told His disciples to feed the people. There was enough food to feed the whole five thousand, and twelve baskets of broken pieces were left over.

In Bethany there lived a man named Lazarus with his two sisters, Mary and Martha. They were friends of Jesus, and He often went to their home and stayed with them. Martha was



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the housekeeper and a very busy, energetic woman, very anxious that her guests should have everything they wanted. Mary was more gentle and loved to sit and listen to the teachings of Jesus. Martha complained to Jesus that her sister would not help her in the work of the house, but Jesus replied that, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

After a visit to these friends Jesus went to a feast at Jerusalem, and while walking in a part of the Temple called Solomon's Porch, some of the Jews asked Him if He called Himself the Christ. They were trying to get Him to say something for which He could be tried by their law, and when He did not answer as they hoped He would they took up stones and tried to kill Him, but Jesus escaped and went to another place.

Jesus loved little children, and now the mothers brought them in crowds for Jesus to bless them. The disciples thought they were imposing upon their master and wanted to

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drive them away, but Jesus was too loving and kind to let this be done, so He said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

While at this place Jesus heard that His friend Lazarus was sick, and before He reached the home where He was always welcome, Lazarus had died and was buried. He had been in the tomb for three days before Jesus appeared. Both the sisters were in such distress that Jesus was troubled too. He asked where their brother had been buried, and when they told Him He wept.

Then they went to the place, which was in a cave with a great stone before the entrance. Jesus ordered the stone rolled away, and after praying to God, cried out, "Lazarus, come forth." And the man who had been dead for three days arose and appeared before them all.

The time came at last when Jesus and the apostles sat down to what He knew was to be their last supper together. He took bread and broke it and gave it to them, and wine also,

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and He told them to do this in remembrance of Him after He had gone. Then He washed the feet of His disciples, even the feet of the wicked Judas, who was to betray Him.

After the supper they all went to a place called the Mount of Olives, and there Jesus told His disciples that, although He was going away, He would come to them again. Then, taking three of them, Peter and James and John, He went away and prayed. When He returned He was met by a band of armed men sent by the chief priests and led by Judas Iscariot, who kissed Jesus on the cheek. This was the signal for Jesus to be taken a prisoner, and He was seized. Peter drew his sword and cut off an ear of one of the band, but Jesus touched the wound and healed it.

Then Jesus was taken before Caiaphas, the High Priest, and people made charges against Him. The High Priest asked Him if He was Christ, the Son of God, and Jesus meekly answered, "I am." Then Caiaphas sent Jesus to Pilate, the governor of the city, and the peo-

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ple abused and insulted Him there. But Pilate said he could not find that Jesus had done any wrong and sent Him to Herod.

Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate after he had arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe and put a crown of thorns on His head. Pilate wanted to set Him free, but the people would not have it so and shouted "Crucify him, crucify him."

So Pilate yielded, and Jesus was put to death on a cross of wood like a common criminal. He suffered agony as the cruel nails were driven through His hands and feet, yet He looked down on the brutal soldiers and said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

A rich man named Joseph had a garden in which was a tomb hewn out of the solid rock, with its entrance closed by a massive stone, and in this tomb Jesus was laid. Yet the wicked Jewish rulers who had brought about the death of Jesus were afraid of Him. He had said He would rise again, and so they asked Pilate to send soldiers to see that no one took

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the body of Jesus away, and, to make it safe, the soldiers closed the door with the great stone and sealed it up.

Three days passed, and then some women followers of Jesus came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away and the body of Jesus gone. But an angel was there, who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead and that they should see Him again.

They did see Him again. A woman called Mary of Magdala met Him in the garden and He spoke to her. Then on a Sabbath day, when the apostles met in secret for fear of the Jews, Jesus appeared to them and showed them the wounds in His hands and in His feet and the one a soldier had made in His side. He afterwards appeared to some of His disciples as they were fishing, and still again He met and talked with two of them on the road to Emmaus, although they knew not then who He was.

Finally Jesus took His disciples onto Mount Olivet and blessed them and gave them their

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last instructions. Then He ascended into the sky and was lost to their view.

His disciples did not forget Jesus and His commands and neither should we. He was our "way-shower," the one whose deeds and sayings have been preserved for us in the Bible. We can do as He did, love our neighbor as ourselves, and follow in His pure footsteps, never forgetting that God is Love.

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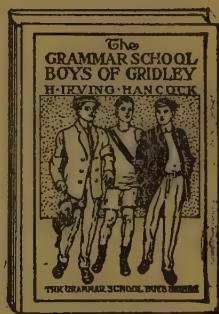
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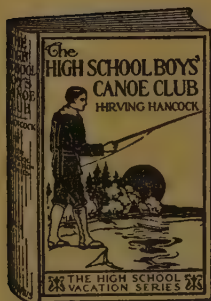
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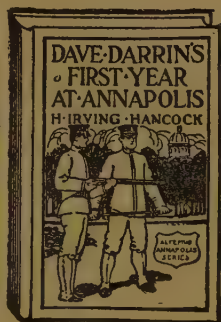
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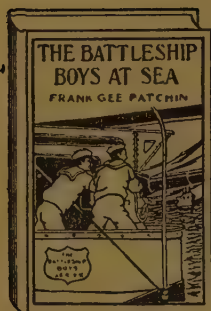
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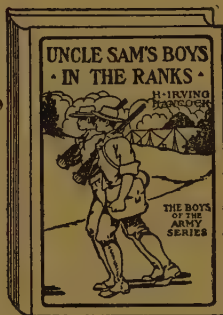
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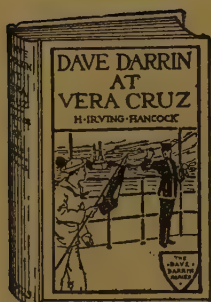


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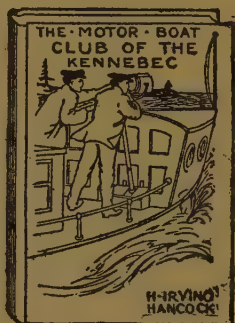
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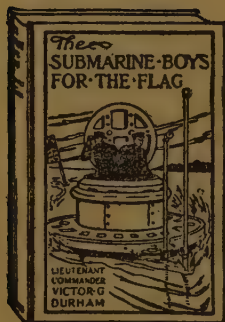


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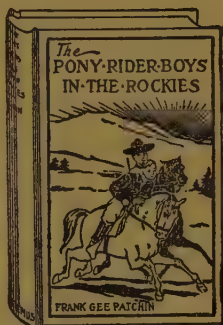


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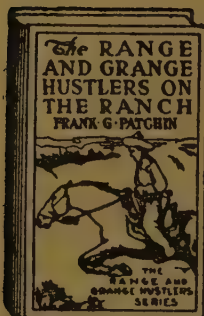
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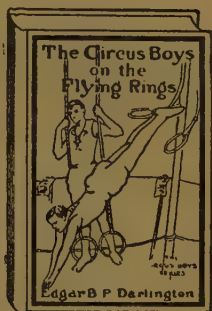
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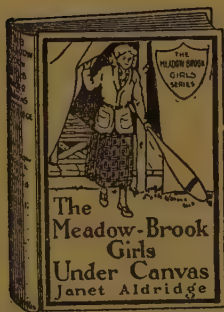
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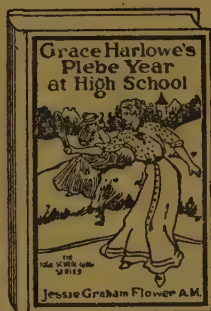
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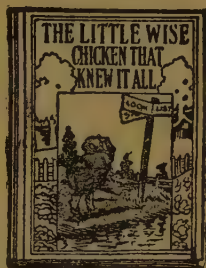
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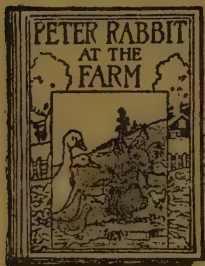
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